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A demonstration of the true
and eternal Divinity of our

Wijnpersse, Dionysius van de

A

DEMONSTRATION

OF THE

TRUE AND ETERNAL DIVINITY

OF OUR

LORD JESUS CHRIST,

IN OPPOSITION TO

THE ATTACKS OF THE PRESENT AGE.

BY

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ASTRONOMY, AT LEYDEN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH.

A NEW EDITION,

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION AND AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY

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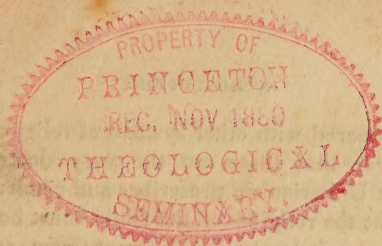
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BY

THE EDITOR.



INTRODUCTION.

THE doctrine of our Lord's supreme divinity, to the demonstration of which the following work is devoted, is the grand leading doctrine of the Christian religion. It is not merely an important truth, without which the Bible would be less interesting, and Christianity less sublime; it is a truth, without which the Bible would be only a few degrees more excellent than the Coran, and Christianity would be stripped of every thing that is *peculiarly* her own. This assertion has, in substance, been frequently made by the upholders of this doctrine; and as often has its truth been denied by the advocates of Unitarianism. The question, however, appears to lie within a very narrow compass. We have only to enquire what *are* the peculiar doctrines of Christianity,

as compared with other systems of religion, to discover that these are the very doctrines which Unitarianism proscribes and condemns.

That the religion of the Bible must be radically and essentially different from every other system of religion, is what no one who believes that book to have been divinely inspired, can consistently deny. The message, for the delivery of which, men were specially prepared of God, and endowed with miraculous powers, we may well conclude to have been one, equally important in its nature, and original in its contents. The Divine Being does nothing in vain ; and it would be a violation of all reason to suppose, that he,—all whose plans and purposes are marked with a simplicity of operation that testifies at once his wisdom and his power,—would employ such a vast apparatus of means, as the inspiration of the Bible would imply, if he had no other end in view than merely to repress the exuberance, or supply the deficiencies of the religious systems previously known among men. Such an end could have been accomplished by far simpler means ; and if such really were the ends to be gained by the communication to men, of the inspired volume, it would be difficult to parry this objection of the infidel,

that the Divine Being had in this one instance departed from his wonted simplicity, and acted in a manner to which no analogy or resemblance could be found in any other of his visible operations.

When we come to look into the Bible itself, however, we find that this is not the case. We cannot peruse its contents, even cursorily and slightly, without discovering that it is indeed what such a book might be supposed to be ; and that it reveals to us doctrines which are peculiar to itself, and which, without it, man never could have discovered. For, whilst it inculcates a purer morality than any other system had inculcated, and developes more clearly than had been ever done before, the original principles upon which every religion must proceed, it at the same time lays down duties, and exhibits truths, of which other religions have not only no *connected* notions, but no notion at all. These truths, though running through the whole inspired volume, and consequently exhibited in a great variety of combinations and connections, may be briefly summed up in the following particulars:—The total depravity, and consequent guilt of the human race,—the atonement of Jesus Christ, and the salvation of men through faith

Christianity at once and peremptorily rejects; and no doctrine is more clearly developed, or more universally proceeded upon in Scripture, than that man is, in the sight of God, wholly depraved, and totally unable, by any efforts of his own, to regain the favour of Heaven, which, by his transgressions, he has forfeited. The testimony of such passages as the following, is very plain and convincing upon this point:—
“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the face of the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” “How then, can man be justified with God, or how can he be clean, that is born of a woman?” “It is written, there is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one. By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his (God’s) sight.”* Of the meaning of these passages, (which form but a very sparing selection

* Gen. vi. 5. Ps. li. 5. Job xxv. 4. Rom. iii. 10, 11, 12, 20.

from the multitude which the Bible contains) there can be no doubt in any candid mind; and the language which they speak is confirmed by the voice of experience, and the deductions of the soundest reason. Every thing around us tells us that man has fallen. The storms and the tempests which devastate nature,—“the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day,”—the diseases which afflict our bodies,—the sorrows and pangs which rend our hearts, and the evil passions which disturb our peace, and infuse their bitterness into our sweetest cup, all remind us of that blight which has passed over the face of nature and of society, and of the melancholy truth, that man is no longer a sinless being, rejoicing in the favour and protection of his God; but a fallen, guilty, and unhappy creature, from whose head the glory has departed, whose whole nature is disordered, confounded, and diseased. Now, a being who is thoroughly depraved, can never enjoy the favour of one who is *perfectly* holy and pure. The two are utterly estranged from each other; they lie at the opposite poles of the moral sphere, and cannot by any possibility be made to unite. In two such beings there exist no points of unity or similitude. Their natures,

their desires, their feelings, their opinions, must be diametrically opposite ; and it is impiety to suppose for a moment, that any love or harmony can exist between them. Nor with any greater propriety can we imagine, that a Being, whose whole nature is repugnant to sin, and by whom, in consistence with the demands of eternal justice, sin must be punished, will ever bestow the blessings of pardon and justification upon a criminal, whom the law has condemned, and for whose derelictions no atonement to justice has been made. To suppose this, would be equivalent to a supposition, that the Divine Being was indifferent to the demands of his own law, and the obligations of his own authority ; that the sword of eternal justice was unsheathed in vain ; and that the arm of Omnipotence was nerveless and weak. God can never connive at that which casts dishonour upon his character and government ; nor in the slightest degree be indifferent to that which, if admitted, would introduce anarchy and rebellion into every department of the universe. And though “ he delighteth in mercy,” and “ willeth not the death of the sinner ;” yet, Scripture is very explicit in shewing us, that that mercy can be exercised only after an atonement has been made

to the violated law and authority of Heaven ; and that man, ere he can enjoy the favour and the fatherly love of God, “must be born again,” and made holy by the indwelling influences of the Holy Spirit.

And this scriptural assurance of the necessity of an atonement, and of a change of heart and life, is accompanied by an equally plain declaration of man’s inability to offer the one, or to effect the other. His sacrifices, his sufferings, his good deeds, are of no avail, either in the way of atoning for sin, or of destroying the power of sin in the soul. “The blood of bulls and of goats cannot take away sin ;” —*temporary* suffering, however great, cannot cancel guilt which has incurred *eternal* punishment ; nor can obedience to one part of God’s law (even admitting that such obedience could be rendered by man) in any way compensate for the transgression of another part, or produce in the sinner’s bosom love to that law which he has broken, and by which he is condemned. How, then, is man to be saved ? or how is that atonement to be procured, without which he cannot be pardoned, and that holiness attained, without which he cannot see the Lord ? To these questions the Bible alone furnishes an answer. There we are told, that

“ God, who is rich in mercy,” has himself provided a Saviour, by whose substitution in room of the guilty, satisfaction has been made to the divine justice, and the grand end of all retributive punishment—the upholding of God’s moral government—has been answered. By the *voluntary* obedience and death of Jesus Christ,—a being perfectly holy and sinless—the divine law has been magnified and made honourable, and a way opened up for the sinner to return to God, and receive his pardon and his favour. By this means the price of redemption has been paid; and the debt of obedience which man owed having been cancelled, God is ready to forgive him the guilt of having incurred it. At the same time, the perfections of the divine character have been glorified; and, if we may so speak, individualised to our conceptions, so that instead of appearing to our view as one blaze of majestic and inapproachable radiance, they have been separately thrown upon the plane of our observation, and the *spectrum*, in all its harmonious variety, has delighted, instructed, and amazed our minds.

This doctrine, though by no means *opposed* to the conclusions of enlightened reason, is so greatly *above* the conception of the most pow-

erful mind, apart from revelation, that many refuse to receive it into their creed. Were this the proper place, the various objections of such might be met and answered : but it is unnecessary. The testimony of Scripture upon the point is plain and unequivocal ; and where Scripture speaks plainly upon any subject, it is not for us to reject its statements, however much they may seem to be opposed to our natural reason.* The passages in which the fact of Christ's substitution, and the merit of his vicarious sufferings are spoken of, are almost multitudinous. The following may be selected as a specimen.† “ He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one into his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” “ Who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.” “ For he

* The reader will find some admirable remarks upon this point in Locke's *Essay on the Hum. Und.* B. iv. cap. 18. ; and in Dr Wardlaw's *Discourses on the Soc. Cont.* p. 1—28.

† For a more ample enumeration, see § x. and xi. of the following treatise.

made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* Against these passages no plea of mistranslation can be urged ; and they are taken from books, the canonical authority of which cannot be doubted. Their testimony, therefore, is as unexceptionable as it is unequivocal and plain ; and nothing, we are persuaded, but the searing influence of a determined adherence to preconceived notions, can prevent every one from feeling their force. The language which they utter, is that of simple unmetaphorical assertion, divested of all attempts at rhetorical parade, and perfectly free from the slightest ambiguity ; and no effort of ingenuity can extort from them any thing but a distinct and unqualified declara-

* Isaiah liii. 5, 6. (see Dr Smith's translation of, and note upon this passage, in his " Four Discourses, &c." p. 28.) Rom. iv. 2—5. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Tim. i. 15.

tion that Christ appeared as a substitute for the guilty, and that his death was a voluntary and vicarious sacrifice for the transgressions of mankind. In other passages we are assured of the Father's satisfaction in the work of his Son, and of his acceptance of the offered sacrifice, and gracious willingness, in virtue of it, to pardon the sins of all who will come unto him through Christ.* The way for man's redemption is thus cleared, and the gate of paradise is opened before him. The favour of God is once more placed within his reach; and the invitations of God are addressed to him, calling upon him to come and accept the proffered mercy. And the man who listens to these, be he the vilest of the vile, shall be received by his offended God, and be blessed with the pardon of all his sins; for "there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."†

Nor is pardon the *only* blessing which the believer receives from the work of Christ; he also obtains the gift of God's Holy Spirit to dwell in his heart, and deliver him from the

* See among others, Rom. vi. 4. 2 Cor. v. 19. 2 Pet. i. 17.

† Rom. viii. 1.

power and the love of sin. Man is, by nature, not only guilty, but also depraved. He is the enemy of God by nature and by wicked works.* And a perfect salvation would be one which freed him from both his depravity and his guilt,—from the inherent evils as well as the penal consequences of sin. But such a salvation has been provided by the atonement of Christ. “Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give *repentance*† to Israel, and *forgiveness of sins*.” He hath been “made a curse for us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” God has instituted an inseparable connection between justification and sanctification; so that the one is never found apart from the other. And when a man is led to see the danger of sin, and the necessity of seeking refuge from God’s wrath in the atonement of Christ, he is at the same time instructed into the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the deep importance of being delivered from its influence and power. The seeds of holiness are thus sown into his heart,—the

* *μετανοειν*, “*mentis mutatio; vitæ, animi, morum emendatio*.”—Wahl. *Clavis N. T.*

† Acts v. 31. Gal. iii. 14.

elements of spiritual life are breathed into his soul,—and with him old things have passed away, and all things have become new.”* From loving sin and delighting in iniquity, he comes to love God, and to find his highest pleasure in his service. His life becomes a course of progressive excellence,—“as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”† And supported by that Saviour who redeemed him from destruction; and guided by that Spirit whose office it is to instruct, and direct, and comfort the saints; he is enabled to fight the good fight, and at last, having finished his course, having kept the faith, to receive that “crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give unto him at that day.”‡

The above remarks, cursory and inadequate to the subject as they are, may yet serve to show that the grand peculiarity of the Christian faith, is the doctrine of Christ’s meritorious atonement as the only means of our acceptance with God. This doctrine is found in no other system of religion that has ever been devised; whilst in the Bible it occupies all the prominence of a leading and fundamental

* 2 Cor. v. 17. † Prov. iv. 18. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

truth. It is in fact the centre of the system, around which all the other doctrines, with their accompanying duties, cluster and revolve. It is the doctrine which alone renders the Bible consistent with itself, and shows the harmony of its various parts ;—which alone gives meaning to the rites and ceremonies of the Old dispensation, and efficiency to the ordinances and admonitions of the New. It is, in short, the only doctrine which harmonises the attributes of the Deity, which casts light upon man's future destiny, and which rescues Christianity from being placed upon a level with religions which have sprung from nothing better than the reveries of philosophers, the superstitions of the vulgar, or the devices of crafty and designing men.

Now, this doctrine is inseparably connected with that of our Lord's divinity ; and is, indeed, entirely dependent upon it ; as it was in virtue of his uniting in one person the human and divine natures, that he was qualified to become our substitute, and to stand between God and us. It was necessary that he should put on *humanity*, in order that he might really become the representative of man—that he might be able to enter into our feelings and circumstances ; and that sin might

be punished, and this law of God magnified in the nature in which the one was committed and the other broken. It was equally necessary that he should be *divine*, in order that his satisfaction might be worthy the acceptance of God. For it is obvious that, as no creature is exempt from an obligation on its *own* part, to obey the whole law of God, so no creature can ever obey that law for another. The highest created intelligence can do no more than his duty ; and the very idea of such an one purchasing, by any effort of obedience, the pardon of another creature, is too palpably absurd to require refutation. No extent of suffering, moreover, sustained by a creature, could in any way have attained the grand end of an atonement for sin, viz. the manifestation of the divine perfections in the pardon of the transgressor. There would have been an obvious injustice in laying upon any creature the weight of innumerable sins of which he was perfectly innocent ; whilst at the same time, the agonies of a mere creature would never have testified so emphatically the divine abhorrence of sin, or the inalienable authority of the divine law, as was done by the voluntary sufferings of one, who was subject to no will but his own, who was innocent of

every sin, and owed allegiance to no superior authority. Besides, it enters into the notion of a mediator, that he should be one who is competent to stand between both parties, and propose terms to each. But what creature can stand between man and God; or what finite intelligence can describe what course of conduct it would be best for the Deity to follow? "Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?"* No; to mediate between God and man would be an office to which no creature, not even the most gifted archangel, would be adequate; and therefore, it is necessary that he who appears in such a character should be what Scripture declares Christ to have been, "God manifest in the flesh."†

The force of this conclusion, Socinians of the present day are at no loss to perceive; and, accordingly, with a consistency which is certainly laudable; but at the same time with a reckless temerity which is awfully indicative of the absence of religious feeling; they have expunged from their creed, all those doctrines which we have already shewn to be peculiar to Christianity.‡ They concur in re-

* Isa. xl. 13. † 1 Tim. iii. 16.

‡ See Belsham's Review of Wilberforce's Enquiry, p. 170.

garding religion as merely the possession of good moral principles and correct habits; and in looking upon the practice of virtue, as that which is to be the ground of their acceptance with God. The divinity of Christ they esteem as a figment—his atonement as a chimaera—and the work of the Holy Spirit as an absurdity—and the doctrine of man's depravity, and of a future state of eternal woe for the impenitent, as the creations of a deluded fancy, or the inventions of a crafty priesthood. All that man has to do in this world, they tell us, is to cultivate religious habits, if he can; and if he cannot, it is no fault of his, as these habits are the result of a certain "state of the brain," over which he has no controul.* And yet, after they have thus degraded Christianity, and stripped her of every thing that most evidently betokened her celestial origin, they nevertheless blame us as bigotted and narrow-minded if we denominate them by their true name—the enemies of Christianity. But what else can we call them? If we call them *Christians*, our own definition of the term will bear witness against

* See Dr Belsham's Works as quoted by Dr Magee, "Discourses and Dissertations, &c." vol. ii. p. 348.

us ; and we cannot call them the friends of Christianity, seeing they reject and repudiate all that is peculiar to that system. How much better would it be, were they at once to lay aside the mask, and professedly unite themselves to the advocates of natural religion, to whom in heart they have been joined so long ! And how foolish, after they have strenuously declared that their best wishes are with the enemy, to linger any longer within the precincts of the camp ! *Aperte dicite non vos credere Christi Evangelio : nam qui Evangelio quod vultis creditis, quod vultis non creditis, vobis potius quam Evangelio creditis !*"*

When we contend, then, for the divinity of Christ, it is not for any mere out-post of our spiritual camp, that we exert our strength, but for the citadel itself, in which our last hopes, and all that is dear to us are deposited. In defence of this cardinal doctrine, much has been written by men of great eminence and talent ; and no one who will take the trouble to study their works, need remain ignorant of the solid foundation of scripture and reason on which it stands. At the same time, there are many who have it not in their power to

* *August, ant Faust*, quoted by Magee, vol. ii. p.339.

devote themselves to the study of the larger works upon this subject; and to whom, accordingly, a brief, clear, and comprehensive view of the scriptural evidence in favour of the divinity of Jesus Christ, would be of great importance. To such we would commend the following treatise of Dr Wynpersse, persuaded that they will derive from the perusal of it, high satisfaction and benefit. They will find it simple, perspicuous, and scriptural; and pervaded with a fine tone of piety and judicious zeal. It is the produce of no hasty or intemperate effort, but the fruit of long meditation and patient research. Without any exhibition of learning, there are evident marks of a highly cultivated and well informed mind pervading the work; and, occasionally, the reader will meet with arguments conducted with much skill, penetration, and originality. Throughout the whole, the author has made brevity his great object; and while this has prevented the introduction of any thing extrinsic to the subject, it has also led, in some instances, to a degree of compression bordering on obscurity, as well as to the omission of some points of importance, at least in the present state of the controversy. It is hoped, however, that in the present edition, the liber-

ties which in a few instances have been taken with the English text, and the addition of a few notes in the Appendix, will render these slight defects less perceptible.

The work was originally composed as an Essay for a prize, offered by the “Society at the Hague, for the defence of the Doctrines of Revelation, in opposition to the attacks of modern reformers;”—a society which took its rise in the Synod of Holland, assembled at Dort, in 1785;—for the best demonstration of Christ’s true and eternal divinity. Shortly after its publication it was translated from the Dutch by the late Mr Hall of Rotterdam, and published in London in 1794. It has received the approbation of very competent judges;* and is now republished in the hope of being made more generally known and more extensively useful.—Nothing can be more amiable or excellent, than the spirit in which it is written. The author unites most beautifully the dignity of truth, with the earnestness of persuasion; and preserves throughout, the character of one whose own faith is firmly established, and who is solicitous to bring others into the same condition. He

* See Dr. J. P. Smith’s *Scrip. Test.* Vol. I. p. 4. III. p. 313; and *Four Discourses*, p. 297.

exhibits nothing of that bitterness of spirit, or that tortuous and uncandid mode of argument, which so much characterises the writings of those who espouse the opposite side of the question. With them the support of their system seems to be the only object of desire ; and to attain this, they have scrupled at no resource, however disingenuous, at no expedient however uncandid or absurd ; *rem si possis recte ; si non, quocunque modo rem*. What they could not explain they have altered, what they could not refute they have ridiculed, and what they could not dilute or weaken by their glosses, they have audaciously expunged from the word of God. From such a spirit nothing can be more averse than that of our author ; and indeed, of every sincere and right-judging man. In a controversy upon a subject of such importance, and involving, not the mere interests of party, but all that is most sacred and important, nothing can be more unseemly or sinful, than the indulgence of a light and trifling spirit, or the prostrating of truth before the shrine of private opinion or public ambition. It is about the character and person of no ordinary or indifferent being that we contend ; but of one before whose bar we must all stand to be judged of the deeds

done in the body. This, whatever Socinians may think of it, is a solemn consideration. Happy that man whose faith is fixed on the Rock of Ages, and who can look forward to that day with confidence and peace! Happy that man who can say with the apostle "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," 2 Tim. i. 12.

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THEOLOGICAL
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&c.

SECTION. I.

THE INCREASING DENIAL OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY
IS REMARKABLE.

A PREMIUM offered for a good demonstration of Christ's true divinity ! Is it, then, a difficulty in the eighteenth century of the Christian æra, to determine what we should believe, with regard to him who is *our peace, our life, our hope*?^a

In the earliest periods of the church, there were some, both private professors and public teachers, who did not continue in that simple, but powerful confidence of faith, by which the christians who walked in the footsteps of the apostles, piously revered and thank-

^a Eph. ii. 14. Col. iii. 4. 1 Tim. i. 1.

fully followed, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose love and cross they found their redemption, and from whose glory and power they derived their consolation in affliction and death. The suppression of the means of knowledge, the intercepted intercourse of the dispersed churches, and especially, the prejudices introduced by Jews and heathens, contributed to effect this degeneracy.

The religious liberty under Constantine, and the growing respect for the clergy, were also the causes of divisions : and thereby, the warm temper and fertile genius of Arius, found an opportunity of broaching his doctrine concerning the Son, as a being between God and a creature ; a doctrine which, by giving it a more polished turn, and making it more conformable to the scriptural style, than the Gnostics had done, he rendered productive of important and lasting consequences.

When the darkness of the middle ages retired, and the holy courage of the reformers was zealously exerted, and their extensive learning successfully employed, in purifying religion from the errors with which it was blended ; it was easy to foresee that some would make still wider schisms. Among others, arose Socinus ; who, with his adhe-

rents, ranked the Saviour's divinity among the inventions of a destructive superstition.

But that *now*, after so much investigation, and in 'the midst of so much light, these differences should still exist; and not only so, but that the sceptics with respect to Christ's eternal divinity, should, in spite even of the profession of the societies with which they are connected, increase;—that many christian teachers should be in doubt about the character of their great Master, and at a loss what rank to assign him in their schemes of divinity;* that many should even refuse him the dignity which is allowed him by Arians and semi-Arians, and consider him as a mere human teacher, peculiarly raised up and qualified of God, to restore the fundamental doctrines of rational religion,—such as the being, the unity, and the providence of God; the law of love, and a future judgment:—this is a matter which deserves our serious attention, and which cannot fail to excite the pious concern of every true christian.

* See Appendix, Note A.

SECTION II.

NO PROOF IN THAT DENIAL AGAINST THIS
DOCTRINE.

MUST we deplore this change in the doctrine, as an ungrateful and most dangerous apostacy, from the Lord Jesus Christ and his saving grace? Or is it a good effect of the greater light of the present age, and a proof that the doctrine cannot bear the trial of time and of strict enquiry? Many errors vanish, when truth gains the victory: and doctrines or disputed questions, formerly canvassed with much acrimony, after a course of time, fall of themselves into contempt.

It is not, however, an established point, that the following times always know the truth better than the preceding; that important principles, formerly adopted with reason, never afterwards become obscure; that an age, in some respects enlightened and advancing in the fine arts, does not, at the same time, either remain ignorant of other arts, or decline in the knowledge of them.

The history of nations and of their refinement; the different course of the exercises of

the mind; the examples of the famous Greeks and Romans, might furnish us with abundant evidence of the truth of this remark. Were the question here, concerning any principles of mathematics, of chemistry, or of astronomy, no vain suspicions would arise, from an increasing aversion to them, that they were false. Nor is it evident, that the same inference would not be made as to ethics and politics, concerning which so much is written. But the light that is thrown upon corporeal objects by experiments, does not suffer us to conclude, that we are able to form juster conceptions of things that come not within the notice of the senses. We must not, at least, build the momentous truths of religion on the passing stream of a fashionable opinion, or upon any prejudices of authority and restraint, but upon the sure grounds of rational demonstration. Where could we otherwise find any limitation to truth? For in our times, there are not only men of understanding, but also protestant teachers, who avowedly deny the divine origin of some parts of Scripture, the immutable authority of others, the limited and literal sense of the sacred historical narratives, and the everlasting authority of the Bible over our faith and practice.

The consequence of this is, many reject Christianity altogether; and (which always happens, when reason wants or despises the salutary instructions and aids of revelation,) they betake themselves to the principles of natural religion. The divine authority of moral laws, divine punishments, the immortality of the soul, and the existence and providence of God, are disowned more in the present, than in any preceding age.

SECTION III.

THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF THIS DENIAL ASSIGNED.

As many, belonging to such religious societies as constantly acknowledge the divinity of Christ to be a capital truth, now shew less steadfastness, or are inclined to disavow it; this must excite a suspicion, at least, of the truth of that doctrine, if powerful, but by no means justifiable, causes of that turn of thinking could not be found in the temper of our own times. Let us mention some of these, without, at present, attending to the more particular principles from which the opposi-

tion of many to that doctrine has, in former or later times, arisen.

That Jesus of Nazareth was of human extraction ; that he partook of the innocent infirmities of our nature, was brought up in poverty, accused of crimes, and, in the vigour of life, was put to death in the most ignominious manner, by the sentence of a civil judge ; that he was, at the same time, the true and eternal God, and nevertheless also the Son of God ; seems so strange to the human understanding, is so very different from the whole course of nature, and appears to the philosopher so justly suspicious, that nothing but a well confirmed testimony from God himself, either will or can produce conviction. None adhere to such a doctrine, except led to it either in imitation of others, and upon their authority, or apparent demonstration, all which is without any sure foundation ; or in consequence of a personal and close examination of a revelation from God, so infallible, that no man of common understanding can, without absurdity, withhold his belief of it. But, as sensual pleasure, temporal advantage, and worldly business, always interfere with religious exercises ; so there is a general complaint, with respect to the loose and unchris-

tian manner in which youth are educated. The diligent and daily use of God's word, both in the family and the closet, so much in esteem among the Protestants immediately after the Reformation, is exceedingly rare. A torrent of new writings, less adapted to convey useful instruction, than to afford amusement, to gratify an idle curiosity, and to encourage a frivolous waste of precious time, has banished the Bible.—Children, after a short and defective education, and such as they are apt to despise, are allowed to make a public profession of the religion to which they have been accustomed, by joining in the holy communion: but this is done in so slight and superficial a manner, that the least banter, in a libertine company, is sufficient to unhinge every good principle, and efface every good impression.—Such professors, as also people of rank, though in other matters ingenious and learned, continue in the same old track, attend the church, and adhere to the doctrines which are taught there: but, as they never examine the foundation of their faith, they remain unsettled, and fall before the assaults of Infidelity.—When the principles of the English Deists (for the most part shrewd philosophers, but whose style of writing was dry and

unpopular) made less progress on the continent ; a number of libertine Frenchmen attacked the Holy Scriptures and the doctrines of Christianity, not by solid argument and sound reason, but by giving way to a sportful fancy ; by artful insinuations, witty allusions, ludicrous representations, banter and ridicule ; and this mode of attack made a great impression, especially on such as had received a more polished education. Their profane scoffs, and ill-applied wit, infused into the unguarded the poison of scepticism ; to extract which, a deeper investigation was necessary, than that to which they were either able or willing to submit. Now, if young scholars, who have been thus corrupted in their defenceless state, and never radically recovered, should afterwards rise to offices in the state, or to other situations of extensive influence ; will they not be obliged, either to accommodate their secret infidelity to their public profession, or to propagate more widely their false and impious principles among men ?

A persuasion of the importance of such truths as are not the objects of our senses, and above the light of reason ; and a well-directed zeal respecting their application and success, are of great use in leading men to acknowledge

them. The times of persecution had a tendency to keep alive a zeal for invisible things, when repose, goods, and life, were risked for the sake of Christ ; when men were obliged to look about for some sure ground of consolation, and could hope for this in Christ, in the midst of losses, banishments, and cruel torments. These times, blessed be God ! are past. Different religious sects exercise mutual forbearance ; the animosities which formerly prevailed, subside ; heaven is esteemed open to professors of doctrines diametrically opposed to one another ; and it is considered as generous to honour their liberty and parts. Be it so. But that civil toleration and indulgence, which is granted to Jews and heathens, is not always distinguished, or kept pure, from an unbecoming and dangerous indifference respecting God, his worship, and the real way to salvation. Orthodox principles, an accurate knowledge, and a discreet vindication of true religion, are, first in the less, and then in the more important points, found to be unnecessary ; and, in regard to mixed conversation, they are unreasonable and odious. What zeal, as to articles of faith, can be expected, for instance, from people who never dared to converse with their children and families con-

cerning their eternal salvation? What can be expected from those who are indifferent about what is said of their Redeemer; who may be content, when their teacher describes his hearers as in a state of condemnation in the sight of God, solely with a view to lead them to the merits of Christ for salvation, and represents them and himself as such in prayer; but who with as much satisfaction hear a teacher that, in the pulpit, is almost silent about Christ, and who does not set so much value on the dignity of the Saviour's person, or on the necessity of his work? What love for the truth can those teachers have, who, very differently from Jesus and his apostles, very differently from the great luminaries of the church in the sixteenth century, think it lawful to undertake the office of the ministry, and to receive salaries from churches, to whose confessions of faith they conform, without believing them, till the way is prepared for spreading contrary sentiments?

Men of letters, who wish to be celebrated for their genius and industry, cannot succeed in this, by adhering to common sentiments; and are often desirous to pronounce decisive sentences concerning them; to look back with contempt on eminent divines and reformers,

whose prudent zeal and comprehensive knowledge they cannot equal ; and to obtain the praise of being more enlightened, by asserting that the mysteries of religion are for the most part useless. Their self-confidence proceeds to give a far-fetched turn to the proofs of these doctrines, or to regard them as improper ; and thus, in effect, to deny whatever stands in the way, and pronounce it good-for-nothing. By neglecting to set bounds to these liberties, many modern teachers have been perhaps carried further than they at first intended. They began, for example, with the existence and operations of angels ; they proceeded to the account of the divine appearances ; and then, by degrees, to that of miracles and extraordinary inspirations, and to whatever is supernatural in the word of God ; and thus the Christian became a Deist.

A later strain of philosophy, under the appearance of a fine demonstration, fondly enlarges on the infinite goodness of God ; in order to prove that, as the Supreme Being stands in need of nothing for himself, the happiness of his creatures is the highest end of his works ; that his laws are not authoritative commands and requisitions, but only friendly counsels and parental prescriptions, as means

to promote our welfare ; that our obligation to obey them does not arise from our absolute dependance on God for creation and preservation, (which would savour too much of the despotic principles of Hobbes) but consists properly in our natural and innocent desire of happiness ; that from the neglect of those prescriptions, no judicial punishments are to be dreaded, but only that evil and infelicity which naturally spring from it ; that sinners, on returning, either at present or afterwards, to those useful rules, and falling in with God's gracious intentions, become happy of themselves. Satisfaction to God's threatening law, supernatural doctrines, and positive precepts, are here unnecessary. By this scheme the doctrine of salvation is wonderfully clear and simple: proceeding on the greatness and goodness of God ; on our confidence in him amidst the evils of life, and on the duties of justice and love towards others. To instruct us in all which, Christ, the best of men, (*a man* only being necessary) was sent, when the understanding of arrogant Jews and idolatrous heathens was too dull to comprehend them by the light of reason. Thus, there is but little necessity for the gospel to the modern enlightened nations! How feebly will the evangelical

mysteries be vindicated by teachers, and maintained by magistrates, who are educated in such principles !

As in this last scheme, there is a gross abuse of the doctrine of the divine goodness, which is as inconsistent with true philosophy, as with the whole tenor of revelation concerning the majesty and grace of God ; so ought the first mentioned principles, which render men insensible of the need they have of a spiritual physician, to excite the sincere Christian to be more solicitous in obtaining information for himself, with respect to the redemption which is in Christ.*



SECTION IV.

HOW TO DIRECT OUR INQUIRY.

IN our researches upon this subject, we must have recourse to divine testimony in the holy Scripture, by which alone we know Christ. In this point, the orthodox and the Arians of old, concurred ; and in this, Roman Catholics, orthodox Protestants, and Socinians

* See App. Note B.

also, are agreed. It is true, many among such as call themselves Christians, are now disposed to be sceptical with regard to the authority of Scripture, and also concerning the mysteries which Scripture contains. But, as every thing must not be handled at once, and as in the examination of any Christian doctrine, the divine authority of revelation as the foundation of Christianity, must be taken for granted; so, it would be quite inconsistent with reason, to reject a well-established doctrine, because a particular opinion is not conformable to it; or, in any serious dispute concerning a proposition relating to the Supreme Godhead, which some look upon as irrational or incredible, but others as sublime, highly interesting, and consistent with reason, not to leave the decision of it to the information which God has given. Nevertheless, we shall not pass unnoticed, objections urged from reason.

It has pleased the Divine goodness, to propose the doctrines of our faith, not in distinct articles methodically arranged, but to interweave them in the relation of circumstances, or in exhortations to duties. But it must be observed, that the determination of any controverted point, does not depend on single or

detached expressions. How highly, for instance, is the Saviour celebrated at one time, and, at another, how much distinguished from God ! Expressions, consequently, scattered throughout the word of God, must be compared, rash conclusions avoided, and well-grounded distinctions and solutions allowed. All prejudices being laid aside, the Scriptures must be carefully read, and a particular attention paid to God's declarations concerning his Son, and the way of salvation, and to the manner in which the Saviour of the world is proposed for our acceptance. If thus we enquire, submitting with reverence to the instructions of Christ and his ambassadors, we shall find his word, when fairly and justly interpreted,* bearing witness to his divine excellence and glory.

Were we to mention all that has been written on this important subject,—the number of passages in Scripture that relate to it, their true reading in the original language, or their meaning and application,—it would fill a library. But this is not our intention. I consider it as most appropriate to the design of a concise treatise, to produce some of the least

* See App. note C.

doubtful evidences of Christ's eternal divinity, to represent them in the simplest manner, and, particularly, to contrast them with the sceptical notions of the present times, in such a way, that the honest enquirer may be confirmed in the truth, whilst objections will perhaps, by this means, be better obviated, than if they were particularly stated and refuted. I find it also necessary, for the sake of brevity, to be totally silent with regard to the writers who have espoused either side of the question, and to confine myself entirely to scriptural proofs. These, I may moreover remark, shall be selected from those books whose canonical authority is undisputed, and which contain abundant matter to prove the truth of the doctrine in question.

If ever this treatise shall see the light, I pray God that it may, with the divine blessing, tend to convince and establish those sincere inquirers after truth, who do not wish to disparage the word of God, or the Lord Jesus; but yet (and we know with affection the anxious struggle of some) dare not adopt our sentiments; who on the divine testimony, look upon the Son as the Saviour of men, but are averse, upon the same testimony, from ascribing to his person that dignity, and to his work

that efficacy by which alone he can save us, and on account of which he is worthy of our confidence and everlasting gratitude ! May it also be of use to those who, while they acknowledge his divinity, have many difficulties concerning it ! For myself I can say, that I have found much pleasure in contemplating this doctrine, which has been the subject of my thoughts for fifty years past. The result I have thought proper to comprise within a small compass, and to reduce to certain heads or sections, the scriptural proofs of Christ's true and eternal divinity. If the reader shall find any of these unsatisfactory, we entreat him not to allow that fault of the writer, whether true or supposed, to draw off his attention from those that remain. As we have endeavoured not to number but to weigh them, so they depend not upon a few passages of Scripture. Though not one word which God has spoken, is indifferent to us, yet we know that, for several reasons, all proofs have not the same influence on all.

SECTION V.

CHRIST'S DIVINE NAMES.

NAMES serve to distinguish objects ; and in Scripture, the names of God are used to distinguish him from other beings. Christ's true divinity is, therefore, justly acknowledged, from the consideration, that the word of truth represents him under the peculiar and distinguishing *names* of the Supreme Being. Nor are these names ascribed to him in a vague, improper, or feeble manner, but in the plainest and most emphatical sense. When the Jews said that he made himself God, he declared that he was greatly above human rulers, to whom the law, in a lower sense, had said, "Ye are gods."^b

He is often emphatically called God, *θεος ο* *θεος*, "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."^c When the esteem of Thomas for Christ was confirmed by his being assured of Christ's resurrection from the dead, he did not cry in wild confusion, "O God !" but answered and

^b John x. 33—36.^c John i. 1.

said, "My Lord, and my God!"^d in the same manner as Mary had just before said to him, "Rabboni!"^e and the confession of both met with his approbation. The apostle, moreover, says, "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen."^f "But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."^g These passages are so significant, that the objections thrown out against them are as easily as they are effectually refuted by just criticism.*

The name LORD as applied to Christ in Scripture, obliges us to acknowledge and honour him as divine. Every where he is called *the Lord*, ὁ κυριος, by way of excellence, and above all creatures. *He is the Lord of all*,^h *he is Lord of lords*.ⁱ He did not first become such, as a reward for his doctrine and sufferings. The angel announced him at his birth, as *Christ the Lord*.^k Before his birth, Elisabeth calls him her Lord;^l and long before this

^d John xx. 28.

^e ver. 16.

^f Rom. ix. 5.

compare i. 3, 4. ^g Heb. i. 8, 9. * See App. Note D.

^h Acts x. 36. Rom. x. 12.

ⁱ Rev. xix. 16.

^k Luke ii. 11.

^l Luke i. 43.

period, king David gives him the same title.^m In his deepest humiliation and affliction he was the Lord.ⁿ He is “the Lord of glory;”^o certainly not of an earthly glory, but of that which is called “the glory of the Lord;”^p in the Old Testament, “the glory of Jehovah;” and on account of which God is also called “the God of glory.”^q That glory was revealed by the splendour imparted to saints and angels;^r but none of these ever had the *glory of the Lord*. The force of the name LORD is taught us by Paul, when he says, “There be lords many, but unto us there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”^s It is true that he at the same time says, “to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him;” which might create a suspicion, as if *God* and *Lord* were contrasted, and Christ called “the Lord,” because he is not “God equal to the Father.”^t But this is of so little weight, that, on the contrary, we prove the divinity of Christ

^m Matt. xxii. 42—45. If from this place it is concluded that Psal. cx. l., should be read not *Adoni* but *Adonai*, the proof becomes stronger, though without that it is sufficient. ⁿ Luke xxii. 61. xxiii. 42.

^o 1 Cor. ii. 8. ^p 2 Cor. iii. 18. iv. 6. ^q Acts vii. 21.

^r Luke ii. 9. 1 Pet. v. 4. Rev. xxi. 11. ^s 1 Cor. viii. 6.

^t 1 Cor. xii. 5, 6.

from the name **Lord**, for this reason particularly, that he bears that name, not in opposition to, but in common with the Father ; and both in opposition to all other beings.* That name is constantly, in the New Testament, given now to the Father, and then to Christ ; and sometimes repeatedly to the one after the other ;^u so that it is often doubtful for which of the two it is intended. Were we, indeed, to apply to Christ exclusively the emphatical name, in all the places where such seems to be the intention, we should find many more evidences of his divinity ;^v but these, on account of their being doubtful, we omit. As then, the Father is called the one God, but likewise elsewhere the Lord ; so the name, the one Lord, given to Christ, but who is in other places called God, may convince us that the title *God* and *Lord* are common to the Father and to him. And how, otherwise, could Christ be *the only Lord*, and *Lord of lords*, since the Father is also *the only Lord*, and *Lord of lords*?^w Who is that Lord before whose face John went to prepare his

* See App. Note E.

^u E. g. Luke i.

^v E. g. 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18.

2 Pet. iii. 8, 9—15. Acts xviii. 8—10. ^w 1 Tim. vi. 15.

way ? (Luke i. 76.) Is it not Christ ?^x If so, then is he also “the Lord, the God of the children of Israel,” (ver. 16, 17.) “the Highest,” (ver. 76.) Jehovah himself, (compare Isa. xl. 3.) And who is that Lord, by calling upon whose name men shall be saved ? (Acts ii. 21.) Is it not Jesus ?^y But if so, then Peter, when he spoke by the influence of the Holy Spirit, looked upon him as the same with him whom the prophet Joel had called *Jehovah*.^z

To this we only add his usual, but peculiarly distinguishing name, SAVIOUR ; which is a title exclusively ascribed to God in his word.^a But the full force of the meaning of this word, as also of the name *Son of God*, we shall defer speaking of till afterwards.

The proof derived from the divine names is yet stronger, when several of them are united and applied to the Redeemer ; as by this means they throw light upon, and confirm one another. “He is the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.^b Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.^c This is the true God and eternal

^x See John i. 7, 8, 23, 31.

^y See Acts iv. 12. ix. 14. xxii. 16. [^z Joel ii. 3.

^a Jude 25. 1 Tim. ii. 3. ^b 1 Cor. i. 9. 2 John v. 3.

^c 2 Pet. i. 1, 2, 20. iii. 2, 18.

life.^d Looking for the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.^e Certain men denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”^f To these three places^g in which he is expressly called God, it is objected, that the name God is in them to be understood of the Father. We do not deny that the words of themselves, supposing the adjoined expressions, and the connection, rendered it absolutely necessary, may bear such an interpretation. But the position of the words in the Greek is such, that, were there no dispute about this doctrine, no one who has a knowledge of that language, would apply them otherwise than to Christ.* Thus, the natural construction and force of the words, as well as the connection and comparison of passages, support our opinion. Now, with respect to all the names which we have mentioned as given to Christ, it must be kept in view, that, if he is not to be acknowledged as divine in consequence of so many powerful evidences, such dangerous and equivocal lan-

^d 1 John v. 20. compare i. 2. and v. 11, 12.

^e Titus ii. 13. compare 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8. 1 Cor. i. 7.

^f Jude 4. ^g See besides Luke i. 4, 7. 1 Tim. i. 1. Tit. i. 3. ii. 10. &c. but these are more doubtful.

* See App. Note F.

guage never could have proceeded from the pens of men who were directed and inspired by God.



SECTION VI.

DIVINE PROPERTIES OF CHRIST.

NAMES are the external signs of the distinction of beings ; and this distinction consists in their properties. The proof of Christ's divinity is, then, most certain, if the attributes of the *Supreme* can be shown, on divine authority, to be ascribed to him ; especially those attributes to which God appeals, as peculiar to himself, and as distinguishing him from all other beings.

In general, then, it is to be observed, that though Christ was man, and still is man even in his exalted state,^h yet he is often distinguished from, and placed in opposition to, all men ; and therefore he must have an existence at the same time, which is not human. “ Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.ⁱ If I yet

^h 1 Tim. ii. 5.

ⁱ Gal. i. 1.

pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ; for I neither received the gospel of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.^k He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise he also that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price, be not ye servants of men."^l What that existence is which is superior to humanity, Paul plainly teaches, when he says, "Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh."^m

Let us consider the peculiar attributes of God, which are ascribed to Jesus Christ.

ETERNITY. He existed in power and glory, not only before his human birth,ⁿ before John,^o and before Abraham,^p but "before the world

^k Gal i. 10, 12.

^l 1 Cor. vii. 22, 23. also Eph. vi. 6. Col. iii. 23, 24. Heb. vii. 28.

^m Phil. ii. 6, 7. See App. Note G.

ⁿ John i. 14. iii. 13. vi. 62. 2 Cor. viii. 9. 1 John i. 2. Phil. ii. 6, 7.

^o John i. 15.

^p John viii. 58.

was,"^q and "before all things."^r He did not then *begin* to be, but he *was*;—"he was with God, and he was God."^s It is testified of Christ, as it is of Jehovah,^t that "he is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega."^u—His duration, and that in opposition to that of creatures, is without "change or waxing old."^v These texts are so clear and positive, as to render the evidence decisive. The Arians applied them all to the existence of Christ before the world. Their endeavours, however, to evade the force of these passages, as also that of the following proofs, are so strained and unnatural, that their true and genuine sense is thereby confirmed; and were such interpretations to be allowed, there is not a sentence in the Bible, of whose meaning we could be certain.*

OMNIPRESENCE. Whilst he was sojourning upon earth, he was nevertheless in heaven.^w When his human nature was translated to heaven, where it still remains,^x he went forth and wrought powerfully here below.^y He is in

^q John xvii. 5. ^r Col. i. 15—17. ^s John i. 1, 2.

^t Is. xli. 1, 4. xliv. 6. ^u Rev. i. 11. ii. 8, &c.

^v Heb. i. 10, 12. * See App. Note H.

^w John iii. 13. ^x Acts iii. 21. ^y Mark xvi. 20.

the midst of all those, be they many or few, that are gathered together in his name ; he is with his people always, even unto the end of the world.^z Paul exercised apostolic discipline, no less in the person or sight of Christ,^a than in the presence of God.^b Omnipresence is included in

OMNISCIENCE. This Christ allowed men openly to ascribe to him.^c When he was upon the earth he knew all men ; and needed not that any should testify of man ; for he knew what was in man.”^d Now he is in heaven, “ he searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the churches.”^e But this is applicable to God only.^f Upon what ground, moreover, but that of his omniscience, can those “ who are absent from the Lord, endeavour to be accepted of him ?”^g “ He is our advocate with the Father ;”^h but how can he act in this capacity, if he have not a perfect knowledge of believers, and of their concerns ?*

In Scripture the perfections of GOD’S FREE-

^z Matt. xviii. 20. xxviii. 20.

^a 2 Cor. ii. 10. See also 1 Tim. vi. 13. 2 Tim. iv. 1.

^b 2 Cor. vii. 12. ^c John xvi. 30. xxi. 17.

^d John ii. 24, 25. ^e Rev. ii. 23.

^f 1 Kings viii. 39. Jer. xvii. 10. ^g 2 Cor. v. 9.

^h 1 John ii. 1. * See App. Note I.

WILL are also exalted above those of every creature. “There is none good but God,”ⁱ says the Saviour: but *goodness, mercy, grace*,—free and sovereign grace towards the guilty—and *long-suffering*, are ascribed to Christ in the fullest sense. “The Lord is gracious.”^k—The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.^l—The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant; and for this cause,” says Paul, “I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering.”^m—So also respecting *righteousness*: for thus we read, “The righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”ⁿ As “God is love, and every one that loveth is born of God;”^o so is it said of Christ, in as full a sense, “that he is righteous, and every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”^p Of God it is said, “As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy;”^q so of Christ likewise, “He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”^r

Christ has a POWER, “by which he uphold-

ⁱ Matt. xix. 17.

^k 1 Pet. ii. 3.

^l Jude 21.

^m 1 Tim. i. 14, 16.

ⁿ 2 Pet. i. 1.

^o 1 John iv. 7, 8.

^p 1 John ii. 29.

^q 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

^r 1 John iii. 3, 7.

eth all things :"^s and his working is such, as "to subdue all things unto himself."^t He is *all sufficient* ; so that his grace is sufficient for his people's support and deliverance, and his "strength is made perfect in their weakness."^u —" Out of his fulness,—a fulness of grace and truth,—have we all received grace for grace."^v—" He is rich unto all them that call upon him."^w

Add to this his **AUTHORITY** over all. " All things are delivered to him of his Father."^x He hath all power in heaven and in earth.^y He is the prince of the kings of the earth;^z far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."^a With regard to his divine authority over the whole kingdom of grace, we shall speak afterwards ; and only observe at present, that when invoked as a king, he with no less authority and grace, than knowledge of the heart, opened paradise to the penitent thief.^b Add to this, the clear

^s Heb. i. 3. ^t Phil. iii. 21. ^u 2 Cor. xii. 9.

^v John i. 14, 16. ^w Rom. x. 12. ^x Matt. xi. 27.

^y Matt. xxviii. 18. ^z Rev. i. 5. xix. 16.

^a Eph. i. 20, 22. ^b Luke xxii. 42, 43.

proof derived from his *power to forgive sins*. When the Scribes asserted that this was peculiar to God, Jesus did not disown it ; but demonstrated, that such a power belonged to himself.^c

We learn, indeed, from the above mentioned texts, that this supreme power is “*given him by the Father ; and that He set him at his right hand in heavenly places, above all principality and power.*” Must we, then, understand this to be of the same nature, with that power which kings intrust to inferior commanders ; or that extensive authority, which eastern monarchs commit to their prime viziers, who are thereby raised above all other subjects, and allowed to sit at the right hand of majesty, but who nevertheless, have only a derived authority, and are excluded from all right to that which is absolute and supreme ?^d It appears, indeed, from the scriptures quoted, that Christ is distinguished from the Father, and that he works in subordination to the Father. This the asserters of his divinity do not deny ; and, in its proper place, we shall consider more particularly. But the illustration of earthly sovereigns and their ministers

^c Mark ii. 5—12.

^d Gen. xli. 40.

of state, must not be carried so far as to render the Scriptures inconsistent with themselves. Is not the right of a son to the father's power, by inheritance, constantly ascribed to Christ, as also the kingdom, the dominion, the throne, and the sceptre?^e "To sit at God's right hand," is explained by "reigning as a king."^f Earthly princes are often compelled, from inability, to have recourse to the assistance of subordinate ministers, in the government of their kingdom. But how unbecoming the dignity of the Most High God, to allow any mere creature, any human being commissioned only to instruct, to sit with him on the throne of creation! Let us, especially remember, what is included in that authority, which is given by the Father to the Lord Jesus. Joseph could assist Pharaoh in the government, because the business of both consisted in what was competent to man, and the abilities of the statesman might be equal to those of the king. But to exercise Jehovah's dominion—to govern heaven and earth—supposes that omnipresence, that omniscience, that

^e Rom. xiv. 9. Col. i. 13. 2 Tim. iv. 1. Heb. . 8. Matt. xxiv. 25.

^f Ps. cx. 1. compare 1 Cor. xv. 25.

original rectitude, that source of ever-flowing benevolence, that inexhaustible strength and all sufficiency, the possession of which evinces the true divinity of Christ.

SECTION VII.

DIVINE WORKS OF CHRIST.

ALL activity proceeds from internal powers, and is an incontrovertible evidence of their peculiar nature. With justice we acknowledge the true divinity of Jesus ; since the infallible witness ascribes to him God's own works, and thereby attests his divine nature and attributes.

CREATION.—“ All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. He was in the world and the world was made by him.^g By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, thrones and dominions, principalities and powers. By him the Father made the worlds. In the be-

^g John i. 3, 10.

ginning he laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of his hands.”^h To understand all this of creating Christ’s church, is inconsistent with the force and generality of these expressions, as well as with their respective contexts. The Gnostics looked upon the Creator, as a middle person between God and man: but agreeably to all sound reasoning, the work of creation requires *supreme* power, wisdom and goodness; and even excludes all means and instruments. By this, God himself is known and distinguished from his creatures; and every where appropriates to himself alone, this work, as the clearest demonstration of his Godhead, and of the folly and evil of idolatry:ⁱ for “the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish.”^k If, then, the true divinity of Christ, be not fairly inferred from the work of creation ascribed to him, the divinity of the Father must want a necessary foundation of knowledge and certainty.

To create *light* and give *life*, are inimitable and distinguished works of the Deity;^l yet

^h Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2, 10.

ⁱ See Psa. xxxiii. 6, 9. xevi. 5. Is. xl. 26—28. xlv. 24. xlviii. 13. Jer. v. 22. Rom. i. 20.

^k Jer. x. 11. ^l 1 Sam. ii. 6. Neh. ix. 6. Isa. xlv. 7.

these are ascribed to the Word. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. He was the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."^m "He is "the prince of life."ⁿ He "had power not only to lay down (bodily) life, but also to take it again."^o He shall raise up the dead at the last day:^p and as Paul demonstrates, "the exceeding greatness of God's power, and the working of his mighty power, in his raising Christ from the dead" and exalting him;^q so does he testify of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he "shall change the vile bodies of his people, and fashion them like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."^r

As "all things consist by the word of God;"^s so likewise "by the word of Christ."^t

When he was upon earth, "he did the works which no other man did,"^u even "the works of his Father;" which acquitted him of the charge of blasphemy,^v by showing him to

^m John i. 4, 9. ⁿ Acts iii. 15. ^o John x. 18.

^p John v. 25—29. vi. 39, 40. ^q Eph. i. 19, 20.

^r Phil. iii. 21. ^s Ps. xxxiii. 6. 2 Pet. iii. 5.

^t Heb. i. 3. Col. i. 17. ^u John xv. 24.

^v John x. 33—38.

be the Lord of nature and its laws. And it is worthy of observation, that many of these works he performed from pity, and of his own free will. “Jesus, moved with compassion, said unto the leper, *I will*, be thou clean.^x As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom *he will*.”^y

The *everlasting salvation* of men, is his peculiar work. What part of it is not ascribed to him? “He is the word of life,—that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us.”^z But this will afterwards come under our review.



SECT. VIII.

DIVINE HONOUR OF CHRIST.

HE to whom the scriptures attribute divine honour, must be a suitable and worthy object of it. He must be *God* ;—he must be *Jehovah* himself, “who will not give his glory to another.”^a—This kind of proof must be the more

^x Matt. viii. 3. Mark i. 41.

^y John v. 21.

^z 1 John i. 2, 3.

^a Isa. xlii. 8.

satisfactory to those who differ from us, as it directly relates to the practical part of religion, to which all that is speculative must be subservient; though even upon the latter they are disposed to set too low an estimate. They talk much about the distinction between *theology* and *religion*: as if that distinction had not been long known; or as if the two were not intimately connected, and the former only the practical knowledge of the latter. Be this, however, as it may; our present subject is concerning true and real religion.

The greatest *respect* and *reverence* for Christ are every where inculcated; “that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.”^b

The *name* of God is in Scripture an evidence of such excellence and dignity, and such authority, as can belong to none but himself. Works which proceed from obedience to him, are said to be done “in God’s name.”^c No creature ought, in a religious sense, to undertake anything in his own name.^d But what does this imply? That “to Christ a name is given which is above every name, that at

^b John v. 23. ^c Mic. iv. 5. Jer. xlv. 16.

^d John v. 43. Acts iv. 7. 1 Cor. -i. 15.

the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is LORD.^e—In his name we are baptized : and in his name repentance and remission of sins are preached.”^f —“ For his name’s sake sufferings and martyrdom” are undergone.^g Nay, it is in his name only that we are saved :^h For that *name* signifies, not only his supreme authority over men ; but also his worth and dignity in the eye of his Father. The Father “ gives whatsoever is asked in his name.”ⁱ “ In the name of Jesus believers are justified, and in his name the Father sendeth the Holy Spirit.”^k

When, therefore, the Father commands “ that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ ;”^l it implies much more than to acknowledge the truth of his doctrine, as we should do that of the other prophets. It implies so to believe in Jesus, as to believe in God ;^m to believe in him, so as that the calling upon his name is built upon, and *salvation* is

^e Phil. ii. 9—11. ^f Matt. xxviii. 19. Luke xxiv. 17.

^g Acts v. 41. ix. 16. xxi. 13. ^h Acts iv. 12.

ⁱ John xvi. 23.

^k 1 Cor. vi. 11. John xiv. 26.

^l 1 John iii. 23.

^m Is. xiv. 1.

the consequence.ⁿ “Cursed,” says Scripture, “be the man that trusteth in man, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.”^o But Christ is represented as the object of a *sure* trust, and of a hope which “maketh not ashamed,”^p as well as the source of our greatest joy ; “a joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.”^q

Christ must be loved above *father, mother, wife, and children*;^r yea, above our own *life*.^s It is given to real Christians not only to believe on him, “but also to suffer for his sake.”^t Now tell us, to what kind of an object does enlightened reason ascribe such honour?

To *call upon* the Lord Jesus, is represented in Scripture as a becoming act of reverence to him ; and this shews him to be a safe refuge in all difficulties.^u Christians were distinguished from Jews and heathens by this, “they called upon the name of the Lord Jesus in all places ;”^v and for this reason, Paul was directed, upon his conversion, to do the

ⁿ Rom. x. 13, 14. ^o Jer. xvii. 5, 7.

^p Rom. x. 11. 1 Cor. xv. 19. [comp. Ps. cxix. 116. Job viii. 13. Rom. v. 1—6. Ed.] Hos. i. 8. 1 Tim. i. 1. ^q 1 Pet. i. 8. ^r Matt. x. 37.

^s Matt. x. 39. ; xxii. 9—13. Luke xiv. 26.

^t Phil. i. 29. ^u 2 Cor. xii. 8. Acts vii. 59.

^v Acts ix. 14, 21. 1 Cor. i. 2.

same.^w Jesus not only allowed himself to be *worshipped*, but commended those who did so.^x Spiritual blessings, which no creature can bestow, are everywhere, and without disguise, sought for from Christ to the church.^y We cannot err, therefore, if we also honour the Saviour with adoration: and this, many of the Socinians even acknowledge. But how comes it, then, that they are so averse from acknowledging his divinity? They must allow that *calling upon*, and *calling on the name*, and *calling upon in time of need*, and with *confidence* and *worship*, are well-known scriptural expressions, applicable only to Supreme Majesty.* This reason itself confirms; because such a mark of honour supposes in its object *that* supremacy, omniscience, goodness, and all-sufficiency, peculiar to the Divine Being. Hath not Jesus himself said, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve?”^z The apostles positively refused to allow any thing in the least degree approaching to such respect, to be paid to them, because they were *men*.^a The angels also refus-

^w Acts xxii. 16. ^x Matt. xv. 25. John ix. 38.

^y Rom. xvi. 24. and elsewhere. * See Ap. Note K.

^z Matt. iv. 10. ^a Acts x. 25, 26.; xiv. 13—15.

ed it.^b Christ, then, who is a man, has also a subsistence, a nature, which is above men, which is above angels, which is *divine*.

It is the prerogative of God alone, to be the *end* of all things, and to receive from them everlasting praise.^c But Christ is also the “First and the last, the beginning and the end.”^d “All things were created by him and *for* him.”^e Believers live and die unto Christ;^f that in both Christ may be magnified.^g “The good pleasure of God is fulfilled in them, that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified in them.”^h All these expressions, especially those of *magnifying and glorifying the name*, agreeably to the Scripture style, are used only in honouring God. Further, as doxologies are frequently addressed to God, so likewise to Christ,—“to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.”ⁱ To him be glory both now and for ever!”^k This, accompanied with adoration, is ascribed to him in the highest possible strain, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and

^b Rev. xxii. 8, 9. ^c Rom. xi. 3—6. ^d Rev. i. 11.

^e Col. i. 16. ^f Rom. xxiv. 7, 8. ^g Phil. i. 20.

^h 2 Thess. i. 11, 12. ⁱ Heb. xiii. 21. Rom. ix. 5.

1 Pet. iv. 11. ^k 2 Pet. iii. 18.

wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."¹*

We must not neglect to observe, that in all these texts, the honour ascribed to Christ, is expressed in such plain terms, and we are so positively commanded to render it to him, that no limitation is any-where set to it, nor any caution given against reverencing him too much. With regard to the great among our fellow-men, we are instructed very differently, and warned against giving them more honour than is due to them as men, and in like manner are we restricted in our respect to angels. On the contrary, the denial of Christ is called *blasphemy*;^m and consequently (taking the word Βλασφημία in its ordinary sense) it is *blasphemy against God*.

If we now consider what has been said relating to the Divine names, properties, works, and honour of Christ,—every *one* of which exalts him above all finite beings,—with what invincible force do these proofs act, when viewed in connection with each other. How can the Bible be the word of God, and yet

¹ Rev. v. 8—14.; i. 6.; xii. 9—12.

* See App. Note L

^m Acts xxvi. 11. 1 Tim. i. 13.

Christ be a mere creature? And how fully does the Holy Ghost instruct us in this, when, in some chapters, several, if not all, of these proofs, are to be found! Read without prejudice, John i. Col. i. and Heb. i.*

It is usual to comprehend the proofs of our Saviour's divinity under the above mentioned four classes, which are so clear and strong, that it would have been improper for us to have omitted them. We choose, however, to speak more at large upon the subject; to consider the excellency of Christ's person in different points of view, and to represent it by some particular features.



SECTION IX.

CHRIST CONDEMNED THOUGH INNOCENT.

ALL christians acknowledge, and therefore it is unnecessary for us to prove, that the Redeemer, though condemned by the Jewish council and by Pilate, to be crucified, was

* [Comp. also Is. vi. 5—10. with John xii. 37—41. Mal. iii. 1. with Mark i. 2. Ps. lxxviii. 56. with 1 Cor. x. 9, &c.—ED.]

perfectly innocent. But, then, there must have been as little ground to accuse him of blasphemy as of sedition. Blasphemy was laid to his charge, because he expressed such things concerning himself, as were above the state and power of man; and such as, proceeding from any one's lips, no religious magistrate could suffer to pass with impunity.^{n*} If Jesus, therefore, suffered innocently, one of the two following assertions must be true: Either he attributed to himself no supernatural excellence; or he did it consistently with truth, and the Jews were bound, and we are also, to acknowledge his divine perfection, on the evidence which he hath given. The former of these is untenable.

As the profoundest reverence of all rational creatures is due to none but the Supreme Being; so it must be suitable to him alone, to speak of himself in such an exalted style, as to lay a warrantable foundation for that reverence.^o But, however zealous Christ was in seeking his Father's honour, and though he never sought his own in opposition to it;^p

ⁿ John x. 33. Matt. xxvi. 65. * See App. Note M.

^o Isa. xl. 25, 26. xlv. 22. Jer. v. 22, &c.

^p John v. 31. viii. 50.

yet he often claimed for himself the greatest glory.

What mere creature might ever say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: I am the resurrection and the life: I give unto my sheep eternal life: I am the true vine; without me ye can do nothing: All things are delivered unto me of my Father?"^q Does he not also intend his own honour, when he says concerning Lazarus, "this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of man might be glorified thereby?"^r when he promised *eternal life* to them who forsake relations, and all that they have, for his name's sake?^s when he allows himself to be worshipped; and when he is addressed as the *Son of God*, the king of Israel; and approves of it?^t when he commanded "the forgiveness of sins to be preached in his name;" and ordered his name to be joined with that of the Father, in the administration of baptism?^u These and similar things spake he to his disciples. But how can these be understood, consistent with propriety, on a denial of his real Deity? And

^q John xiv. 6. xi. 2. x. 28. xv. 1—5. Matt. xi. 27.

^r John xi. 4. ^s Matt. xix. 29. ^t John i. 50—52.

^u Luke xxiv. 47. Matt. xxviii. 19. comp. 1 Cor. i. 15.

how dare we unite ourselves, to the followers of such a Master, if we cannot discern in him a two-fold nature,—a finite and an infinite existence?

No less did he publicly exalt himself in the hearing of the people, and also of the scribes, and rulers of the Jews. Far from flattering them or their doctrine, he roused their attention, and wounded their pride, by severe and direct attacks upon their prejudices, their morals, their traditions, and their customs. He also forgave sins; and spoke often of himself, as a person more excellent than the most respectable and esteemed of mankind; as superior to the prophets, to Solomon, to David; as greater than the temple; as God's *own* and *only* Son; as equal to the Father in power and authority, nay, as even one with the Father; as the source of light and everlasting life; and so on.^v He “who was come to bear witness to the truth,”^w by no means denied the consequence which was drawn from this, that “he bore record of himself,”—that “he made himself equal with God,”—that “he made himself God:”^x but rather confirmed it from

^v See Mark ii. 5. Matt. xii. 6, 8, 41, 42. John x. 34—36. v. 17—39, &c.

^w John xviii. 37.

^x John viii. 13. v. 18. Mark ii. 6, 7.

ancient prophecy, and from the miracles which he performed.^y When the Jews, persisting in unbelief, set themselves against this, he prepared the way for his intended and predicted sufferings, by his public entry into Jerusalem; by permitting the acclamations of the multitude, which he had formerly avoided; by censuring and rebuking the elders: and by other acts of authority, which gave occasion to ask, “by what authority doth he these things?” And what account did he give of this? The following:—that he was *the Son*, and therefore, the heir of the vineyard of the Jewish people, in which they were only unfaithful *labourers*; that he was the corner stone of the true church, which would crush them as unwise builders, in pieces; and this, they all understood to be spoken against them.^z When they had arrested and examined him; when they had brought him to his oath, (highly improperly, as he was accused of blasphemy,) he declared himself to be *the Christ*, i.e. as he had shown a short time before, *David’s son and David’s Lord*. He also asserted, that he was “the Son of God,

^y John v. 39—46. Mark. ii. 8—12. John v. 36, &c.

^z Matt. xxi. xxiii. Luke xix. 35 xxvi. 63, 64.

who should come in the clouds heaven,"^a to take vengeance. And what was his good confession before Pilate? That he was a *king*, but of higher authority than Cæsar,—the king of *another* world.^b

Must not we conclude, then, either that the Jews had reason, or even were bound, to declare him guilty of blasphemy, since they had "a law by which he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God ;"^c or that Jesus is not a mere creature? It is not without reason said: Either Jesus was more than a created teacher, or the doctrine of Mahomet and of other eminent heads of sects, was more humble and more wise than his. If Jesus were only a human teacher, he was such a man, and such a teacher as no good man would wish to be.



SECTION X.

CHRIST THE AUTHOR OF OUR SALVATION.

THE exalted and divine name of *Redeemer and Saviour of the world*, is given as a peculiar

^a Matt. xxii. 43—46, &c.

^b John xviii. 36, 37.

^c John xix. 7.

and distinguishing name to the Son of Mary, by the command of Heaven; and it was at the same time declared, that “he should save his people from their sins.”^d He “delivers from the wrath to come.”^e Christ is the Saviour of the world.^f It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.^g The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.^h He is become the author of eternal salvation.ⁱ This is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.^k This is the stone which is become the head of the corner; neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.”^l—Now, whoever thou art, whose earnest desire it is to be saved from temporal and eternal misery, which is the consequence of the fall, and to recover thy Creator’s friendship, with unfading glory; wouldst thou seek it in, expect it from, and ascribe it with everlasting thanksgiving to, a mere creature? Must not

^d Luke i. 31. Matt. i. 21.^e 1 Thess. i. 10.^f John iv. 42. ^g 1 Tim. i. 15.^h 1 John iv. 14.ⁱ Heb. v. 9. ^k 1 John v. 9—11.^l Acts iv. 11, 12.

“all the ends of the earth,” in order to be saved, “look unto him” who can say, “I am God, and there is none else?”^m

But many suppose they can evade this demonstration, by confining the saving work of Jesus to the following positions:—That he came to teach the grounds of natural and immutable religion, and the principles of pure morality, as being the way by which men might please God, and acquire a taste for everlasting happiness: And that he confirmed his mission for the execution of this design, by miracles and a voluntary death, as reasoning and wisdom alone could not convince the Jews and heathens of their errors. Agreeably to which, say they, Paul testifies, that it is “by the gospel that life and immortality are brought to light.”ⁿ Let us attentively consider this.

As this scheme does not at all accord with the sense of the passages produced to support it, so neither is it consistent with just criticism. The Greek word *Σωτηρ*, *Soter*, by which the gospel every where announced the Lord Jesus, (and usually translated in our version *Saviour*,) was well known to the people of that

^m Isa. xlv. 22.

ⁿ 2 Tim. i. 10.

age. It was applied, not to philosophers and teachers, but to renowned heroes and princes ; and was one of the greatest and most exalted appellations with which their subjects, either from gratitude for a mighty deliverance, or from flattery, honoured them, by impressing it on medals, or inscribing it on monuments of marble.* The Greek interpreters, in their translation of the Old Testament, express by it the Hebrew word יְשׁוּעָה, and other words of the same root, from which also the name Jesus is derived. They commonly apply that name to God, and sometimes to magnanimous and prosperous deliverers, raised up of God for the people. The heavenly annunciations of our blessed Lord confirm this. When Gabriel commanded Mary to call her son *Jesus*, he described him by his transcendent greatness ; by possessing the throne of David, and an everlasting kingdom, (Luke i. 31, 33.) To the shepherds were published good tidings of great joy ; for unto them was born, in the city of

* “[Ζευς ΣΩΤΗΡ και ἡγεμων.” *Xen. Cyr. vii. i. 10.*
 “ ἐπέλεον ἀποδιδόναι τόν Δημήτριον, ΣΩΤΗΡΑ καὶ εὐεργετην
 ἀναγορεύοντες.” *Plut. in vit. Demet.*—“ Σωτηρ, ὁ Ζευς,
 και ὁ ἰλευθεριος, ἡλυτρωτης.” *Hesychines in verb. ed. Aldi.*
 1514. *Comp. Cic. in ver. Act. ii. l. ii. 63.—EDIT.]*

David, *Soter*, the *Saviour*, Christ the Lord," Luke ii. 10, 11. Therefore the name *Jesus*, *Soter*, *Saviour*, points him out not barely as a teacher and instructor, but as the victorious and powerful procurer of our true and eternal salvation.

We respect as our supreme and most necessary teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was powerful in word and works ; and we rejoice in the important aid which human reason has received from the gospel, as it is by this, and not by our ingenuity and wisdom, that our ideas of natural religion, and our morality, excel those of the most celebrated heathens. But when Paul, in the above-cited passage, says, that Christ "hath brought life and immortality to light;" our Saviour Jesus Christ "hath abolished death;" this is more than mere instruction. *To give life*, is more than to preach it ; and this our Lord ascribes to himself.^o—The gospel every where informs us, that our salvation is not founded merely on our Lord's discourses, much less on the doctrines of natural religion ; but on Jesus Christ himself ; that is, on the dignity of his person, on the work he performed, and on the

^o John x. 28.

suffering she underwent. "No other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ."^p Were we to understand by this foundation, a fundamental doctrine; yet that must be a doctrine concerning Christ. "He himself is our life."^q "To know him is eternal life."^r "He himself is the bread of life:" *that is*, his person, his flesh, and his blood which he hath given for the life of the world.—"He who hath the Son hath life: he who hath not the Son of God hath not life.* The only begotten of the Father hath a fulness out of which we all have received, and grace for grace."^t This appears also from what Christ actually taught. His discourses and preaching were not confined to the contemplation of God, and the practical part of religion: but they often related to his own person,—what he was, whence he came, what he was able and willing to do for the salvation of men. Consider his conversation with Nicodemus;^u with the Samaritan woman;^v with the Jews;^w and his addresses to the multitude^x and to his followers.^y

^p 1 Cor. iii. 11.

^q Col. iii. 4.

^r John xvii. 3.

^s John v. 51—56.

^t John i. 14, 16, 17.

^u John iii.

^v John iv.

^w John v.

^x John vi. vii. x.

^y John xv, &c.

This is also clearly confirmed by the preaching of the apostles, which certainly comprehended “the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness, in hope of eternal life.”^z But this is also called “*preaching Jesus Christ*; that is, not only his doctrine, but *himself*,—whatever must be known of his person, sufferings, resurrection, and work. They “preached Jesus Christ the Son of God.”^a “They preached Christ crucified.”^b And assuredly their ministry “was the witness of his resurrection;”^c so that, if Christ were not raised, their preaching was vain, and the faith of christians vain; then were “believers yet in their sins, and they also that had fallen asleep in Christ perished.”^d The apostle asserts, that salvation belongs to them who confess the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe with their heart that God raised him from the dead.”^e By publishing the gospel, they preached “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”^f Thus the riches, the saving fulness of Christ, means not the gospel or the doctrine itself, but the subject and contents of that doctrine. The gospel was written, and the preaching of it ap-

^z Tit. i. 1, 2. ^a 2 Cor. i. 19. ^b 1 Cor. i. 23.

^c Acts i. 22. ^d 1 Cor. xv. 16—18.

^e Rom. x. 9.; iv. 21. ^f Eph. iii. 8.

pointed to make known the rich and unsearchable sufficiency of Christ for poor sinners, of which, without this gospel, they must have remained ignorant. This is confirmed from the Acts of the Apostles, and their discourses and reasonings. Whenever they preached the gospel for the first time among the Jews, (whose acknowledgement of the true God, the creation, providence, and the like, they might take for granted) they immediately declared that God had sent his Son, according to prophetic prediction,—that he was unjustly crucified,—that he was buried, but raised again,—and that in him there was forgiveness of all sin. This deserves to be carefully considered.^{ff} In this way also, they proceeded with heathens; for the sum of the gospel of salvation preached to the Corinthians, (who were both Jews and heathens) Paul says, consisted in this: That he had “delivered unto them, first of all, that which he also received; how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.”^{*g} Heavenly visions prepared the way for Peter and Cornelius to come together,

^{ff} Acts ii. 22—39.; iii. 12—26.; iv. 8—12, &c.

* See App. Note N. ^g 1 Cor. xv. 1—4. comp. ii. 1, 2.

that the centurion might hear “the words of *salvation*.”^h And to what particulars did these refer? To the principles of natural religion, or to show that religion is exercised by worshipping God and loving our neighbour? No: Cornelius knew that, and in the practice of it he was an eminent example. What then did the apostle announce to him? “Peace through Jesus Christ, and that he was the Lord of all; that, having gone throughout the land of Judea doing good, he was hanged on a tree, but raised again from the dead; that God had commanded his apostles to publish him, as the Judge of the quick and the dead; and that to him gave all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him should receive remission of sins.”ⁱ

Besides, if the work of redemption be limited to the ministry of Jesus, how is he the *only* Saviour? And with what propriety can it be said, that “there is salvation in no other?”^k Jesus published the truth only among the Jews and in Palestine; often, too, for just reasons, in a parabolical style—frequently with doubtful success—only by word of mouth—mostly without the cities, and not much more

^h Acts x. 1—24, ⁱ Verses 36—43.; ^k Acts iv. 12.

than three years. The apostles, on the contrary, were engaged many years in setting forth doctrines and moral duties in the clearest light, not only in Judea, but throughout the world; among heathens as well as Jews; by writing as well as by word of mouth; and they triumphed in Christ.¹ Are they, then, also the saviours of the world? By no means. "There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."^m But, it may be said, they received that doctrine from Christ, and were sent by him. This, however, was not the case with Paul; at least with Apollos, Timothy, and others, whose mission, together with the remarkable illumination of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, having not taken place till after our Lord's ascension, cannot be ascribed to Christ, if his divine influence and direction on earth be not acknowledged.

Do these modern divines who differ from us, esteem Jesus, under the character of a Saviour, no longer than his personal ministry among men continued? Are they in no need of that physician, having healed themselves by the refinements of reason? Does their philosophy teach them to come to the Father in

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 14.

^m 1 Tim. ii. 5.

any other way, than by him ?ⁿ Is he not still “able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God through him ?”^o Is there not still “salvation in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory ?”^p Is it not Jesus who still “delivers us from the wrath to come ?”^q Do not, therefore, true Christians, who have not seen him, still love him ; so that “though now they see him not, yet, believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ?”^r Is he not “with us always, even to the end of the world ?”^s Is not “the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, still looked for from heaven, who will change our vile body ?”^t

We conclude, that the Lord Jesus, by his doctrine, and especially by his exalted power, and the efficacy of his work, is the source and author of eternal salvation to sinners ; and, therefore, is to be acknowledged as *the true and everlasting life* ; as will be more fully proved in the next section.

ⁿ Matt. ix. 12. John xiv. 6. ^o Heb. vii. 25.

^p 2 Tim. ii. 10. ^q 1 Thess. i. 10. ^r 1 Pet. i. 8.

^s Matt. xxviii. 20. ^t Phil. iii. 20, 21.

SECTION XI.

CHRIST THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.

INTELLIGENT Trinitarians and Unitarians have always acknowledged a close connection between the doctrine of Christ's true divinity, and that of his satisfaction for sin; so that both of them must be at once admitted or denied. If he was able, by his sufferings, to satisfy the justice of God for the sins of all believers, he must be more than a mere creature. If the contrary, such a satisfaction was not necessary; yet no other reasons appear to be of such importance, as to have induced him, who was God, to make himself "of no reputation, and to take upon him the form of a servant, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The truth of Christ's satisfaction is, indeed, established in the word of God, by such a variety of eminent proofs, that those of different sentiments find themselves obliged to give to what is everywhere said concerning it, such an arbitrary, feeble, improper, and unnatural sense, that, by their mode of interpretation,

all the doctrines of the Bible are in danger of being evaded. On their principles of interpretation, it may be justly said, That of all the books containing articles of faith, the Bible may be considered as the most uncertain and delusive. Concerning the point in hand, much has been written. Our view of it shall be confined to the following observations:—

In the course of our Lord's ministry on earth, we find evident proofs, that he was designed not only to instruct as a prophet, but also, and more especially, to suffer and to die, which was a saving and highly necessary work. He declared that "he came to minister, and to give his life a *ransom* for many."^u He often informed his disciples, that severe and humiliating sufferings awaited him; and that what was written concerning him must be accomplished.^v To favour this view, the circumstances and manner of his life were entirely directed. The celebration of his birth, by a multitude of the heavenly host, was heard by a few humble shepherds; and some remarkable earthly witnesses^w were forgotten, while he lived in obscurity, in a small remote village. John the Baptist was the only

^u Matt. xx. 28. ^v Matt. xvi. 21. Luke xviii. 31, &c.

^w Matt. ii. 2. Luke ii. 25—38.

witness of his heavenly consecration ; and only three of his followers were favoured with a sight of his glorious appearance on the mount of transfiguration. Nay, he forbade this to be mentioned before his resurrection, and even prohibited his disciples to make him known as the Christ.^x He frequently ordered, that the cures which he performed should not be published abroad.^y His discourses were often obscure and figurative,^z and more adapted to enflame people of rank against him, than to prepossess the multitude in his favour. When, at any time, his superior excellence could not be wholly concealed, and when men would have paid him homage and respect, he avoided it.^a To this it was owing, that the judgment and confidence of the people concerning him, were much more vague and uncertain, than even his austere forerunner.^b In a word, the whole course of his ministry was so directed, as might best serve, not to prevent, but to prepare the way for his sufferings and death ;^c while the further elucidation of his doctrine, and its more extensive propagation, with the publishing of his death and exalta-

^x Matt. xvii. 9. xvi. 20. ^y Matt. viii. 4. ix. 30, &c.

^z Matt. xiii. 10—17. ^a John vi. 14, 15.

^b Matt. xxi. 26. John v. 35. ^c Luke xiii. 31—33.

tion, were to be the work of the apostles in his name.^d

That Christ suffered and died for the advantage of his people, cannot be denied. For this also the apostles died. But, then, was any one of them *crucified for us* as was Christ? This, according to Paul's view of the matter, would be absurd in the extreme.^e What then has the Saviour done, or suffered, which no other did, or underwent? "He was delivered for our offences.^f He suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.^g He died for our sins.^h The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."ⁱ He delivered us from our sin, by taking it to himself. For "he who knew no sin, was made sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."^k His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.^l Behold, *said John*, the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."^m And how does he take it away? By his death. For, to speak of Christ under the notion of a Lamb that taketh away sin, had no meaning, unless

^d Acts i. 8.

^e 1 Cor. i. 13.

^f Rom. iv. 18.

^g 1 Pet. iii. 18.

^h 1 Cor. xv. 3.

ⁱ 1 John i. 7; Rev. i. 5.

^k 2 Cor. v. 21.

^l 1 Pet. ii. 24.

^m John i. 29.

we regard it as referring to the paschal lamb, or to other lambs, which were offered in sacrifice, according to the law. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."ⁿ—Ye were redeemed, by the precious "blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot."^o—He substituted himself in our place, fulfilled for us the demands of God's law, and satisfied for us the divine justice. Why, of all men, of all saints, of all the most distinguished teachers, was Christ alone free from every degree of moral impurity? This was not absolutely necessary for himself, as a *prophet*: but it was necessary, that he who was to fulfil the law for others, should not have any sin of his own, for which he was obliged to make satisfaction.^p "God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us."^q God sent forth his Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."^r—This the apostle most clearly confirms, when he directs our attention to the death of Christ, as a signal mark of the curse." It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are

ⁿ 1 Cor. v. 7. ^o 1 Pet. i. 18, 29. Rev. v.

^p 2 Cor. v. 21. ^q Rom. viii. 3, 4. ^r Gal. iv. 4, 5.

written in the book of the law to do them—Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. For it is written, *cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*^s

This important doctrine is also represented under the terms, Purchase, Ransom, Reconciliation, Propitiation, and Testament. Let it not be objected, that these modes of speaking are borrowed from other subjects ; and, therefore, are to be taken in an improper and figurative sense. *A figurative sense*, is, certainly, not *nonsense*, or what has no meaning ; but serves to render deep subjects more comprehensible to a common understanding.

A Purchase. Believers are God's, both as to soul and body, because they are *bought with a price.*^t They are the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.^u The Lamb is thus addressed ; "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."^v Which clearly shews, that their salvation is to be ascribed to the death of Jesus.

A Ransom. In the New Testament, the word *redemption* is often used as the version of a word that properly signifies *ransoming*. Thus, "ye were redeemed, not with corrup-

^s Gal. iii. 10, 13. ^t 1 Cor. vi. 20. ^u Acts xx. 28.

^v Rev. v. 8, 9.

tible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.”^w This redemption is said to consist in *the forgiveness of sins*.^x It is, therefore, his blood and death which he hath *paid* to deliver us from the debt of sin. He “came to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”^y

Reconciliation. This is called in the Greek, *καταλλαγή*, (conciliatio) that is, *peace-making*. Thus believers are reconciled to God, “by the death of his Son;^z by his cross;^a by the blood of his cross, and in the body of his flesh, through death.^b God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; (*which is said to be*) his not imputing to them their trespasses.”^c

Propitiation. This is the translation of *ἱλασμος* (expiatio) a word which was applied to the sacrifices offered in ancient times; for these, being substituted in the room of the guilty, served as a typical reconciliation to God. Thus is “Jesus Christ, the righteous, the propitiation for our sins.”^d God hath sent his

^w 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

^x Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14

^y *λυτρον*, Matt. xx.

28.; *ἄντι λυτρον*, 1 Tim. ii. 6.

^z Rom. v. 10.

^a Eph. ii. 16.

^b Col. i. 20—22.

^c 2 Cor. v. 19—21

^d 1 John ii, 12.

Son to be a propitiation for our sins.^e God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.^f Therefore, the Lamb of God hath so taken away "the sins of the world," that he took them upon himself; he bore them; he died in our stead.

A Testament. In his last supper, the assignation of the eternal inheritance is called "The New Testament in his blood, which was shed for the remission of sins."^g This evinces not only that Christ was perfectly entitled to bequeath that inheritance; that, not only his death, as the testator, was necessary to the putting his people in possession of it; but that this inheritance had its foundation in the shedding of his blood; in his humiliation and death; by which those offences, which stood in the way of their salvation, might be forgiven. If any choose to render it, *new covenant*, instead of *new testament*; the sense will be the same, though the application be somewhat different.

This leads us to speak of the Epistle to the Hebrews; in which all these doctrines are

^e 1 John iv. 10.

^f Rom. iii. 25.

^g Matt. xxvi. 28. 1 Cor. xi. 25.

confirmed at great length, and with much force of argument.^h That Epistle was intended to show, that the authority of Christ's instruction, is superior to that of all the prophets, even of Moses himself; and, by using expressions, borrowed from the ancient worship, and suited to the Hebrews, to point out the agreement between his priestly office, and the design of the Levitical sacrifices, and to exalt it infinitely above Aaron's priesthood. Christ, being a priest of a higher order and of never-failing ability, needed not to offer sacrifices for his own sins; but, having offered himself up to God, and thereby taken away our sins, hath opened a way to heaven, and is able to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him. Read chap. v.—x. Should this Epistle be suspected, and erased from the sacred volume, because it contains a doctrine so full of consolation? It appears, however, that no doctrine is contained in it, which does not elsewhere occur: though it is not exceeded by any of the other Epistles, in sublimity of subject, in clearness of demonstration, in honour ascribed to God's grace in Christ, in strong consolation, in encouragement under

^h Heb. ix. 15, 16.

difficulties, and in motives to holy perseverance.*

It is only in the Saviour's satisfaction that the reason is to be found, why his sufferings and his resurrection, are every where represented as the capital subject of the gospel. No other part of our Lord's history and ministry, is so much insisted on by all the Evangelists. We have already seen, that the Apostles preached, not only gospel morals, but also, and more especially, Christ himself; that is, his person, his work, and his two-fold nature. Paul would "not know any thing among the Corinthians, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.ⁱ The cross of Christ was the only subject of his glorying.^k He makes the knowledge of Christ, for the excellency of which he reckoned all things but loss and dung, to be the knowledge of the power of his resurrection, and of the fellowship of his sufferings."^l

Respecting that important conversation on the mount of transfiguration, between our Lord and the two great teachers and reformers of ancient times, all we find mentioned

* See Appendix, Note O. ⁱ 1 Cor. ii. 2.

^k Gal. vi. 14. ^l Phil. iii. 8, 10. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

is, that they spake “of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”^m It is in the cross of Christ, and the humiliation and sufferings connected with it, that the love of God towards man, by not sparing his own Son,ⁿ and his wisdom and power unto salvation,^o are most signally displayed. In the cross, too, is “the destruction of the power, and deliverance from the fear of death,”^p freedom from the dominion of sin,^q and everlasting glory^r are the fruits of it. The simple, but consolatory tokens of the grace of Jesus in baptism and the Lord’s supper, refer us also to his *atoning death*; and, in the institution of the latter, a particular charge is given “to shew it forth.”^s

The mean of our acceptance with God, and of our justification, is every where said in the Gospel, to be faith in Christ:^t and that, too, in direct opposition to the law, or seeking our justification by the works of the law.^u But,

^m Luke ix. 31.

ⁿ Rom. v. 8. viii. 32. 1 John ii. 10.

^o 1 Cor. i. 17—25, &c. ^p Heb. ii. 14, 15.

^q Rom. xi. 3. 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2. ^r Rev. i. 5, 6.

^s Rom. vi. 3, 4. Col. ii. 12. Matt. xxvi. 28. 1 Cor. x. 16, &c. ^t John iii. 16. Acts xvi. 31.

^u Rom. vi. 1—5. x. 3—11. Gal. ii. 16. Phil. iii. 8—10.

if to believe in Christ, signify only to receive and obey his doctrine, respecting the rational grounds and duties of religion ; how came the doctrine and righteousness of faith to be not only different from the demands and righteousness of the law ; whether we regard the natural moral law, or the written law of Moses? Moses, we know, had also taught the doctrine of natural religion ; such as the existence, unity, and providence of God, and the duties of man to man : and, that the love of God and our neighbour, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices, was often inculcated under the Old Testament dispensation, and not unknown to the Jews.^v Or, does the prohibition, with regard to seeking righteousness by the law, mean only laying aside the Mosaic ceremonies? But, in the forecited texts, and in various others, the term *law* cannot possibly be understood in such a limited sense. Besides, the righteousness of faith, in contra-distinction to that of the law, existed in ancient times;^w and, therefore, those ceremonies might, even then, have been repealed. But they were appointed by God himself, and for that reason, the

^v Mark xii. 32—34

^w Rom. iv. 1—5.

observation of them was not so inconsistent with a rational religion, as of themselves, to put men into a state of condemnation. Paul constantly teaches us, that the opposition between faith and the law, consists in this, that God's inflexible law condemns all sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles; that "by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified; that the law, through sin, is become weak" to give life; but that faith acknowledges and receives Christ, as him who "hath fulfilled all righteousness; who was made a curse for us; and who was set forth to be a propitiation through faith, (not only in his doctrine, but in his blood,) to declare his righteousness."^x

If it were not so, why was "Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness?"^y Certainly, not on account of the capital truths of natural religion which he taught. The Jewish teachers, and the best heathen sages, who had acknowledged those truths, were honoured on that account. Nor was this offence taken, because Christ, a worthy and faithful, though a despised teacher, was unjustly accused, and

^x Rom. iii. 19—31. xiii. 3, 4. Gal. iii. 10—13, &c.

^y 1 Cor. ii. 18—25.

shamefully put to death. 'The condemnation of Socrates, was not remembered with contempt. The true reason of the offence was this: The sufferings of our Saviour, were declared to be the only ground and source of our reconciliation and salvation; while both Jews and heathens supposed they might be saved by the worth of their own virtue. It appeared to them, therefore, exceedingly strange, and offensive to their pride, to seek life by the way of humiliation and confession of sin; in the deep abasement of a crucified Redeemer; and in his justifying resurrection.^z

What we have thus far endeavoured to demonstrate, makes it evident, that the sufferings of Christ for sin, must not be so understood, as if God's only view in them was, when about to announce to the world grace and life by the gospel, first, to make known his detestation of sin, by a remarkable example of his vengeance which all sinners had deserved; and that for this purpose, he gave up to so much pain and ignominy, an eminently qualified ambassador. For it must be allowed, that all preceding ages had afforded awful instances of God's high displeasure

^z Matt. xvi. 21—23. John vi. 51—66.

against the sins of individuals and of nations, without a deliverance from sin ever having been ascribed to them. An infamous death, to which the sentence of a civil judge condemned a person from among the lower orders ; or a teacher wandering about in poverty ; was much less suited to give a signal and extraordinary example of divine wrath, than the immediate interposition of providence ; which had often in former times inflicted, and was able still to inflict, miraculous punishments on distinguished individuals, or on a whole people. In order to testify a just abhorrence of sin, vengeance must not be let loose upon one that was perfectly innocent. For that would have been unjust in the extreme ; unless (according to what the scriptures already mentioned have taught,) this innocent person, with the approbation of God, and in a manner as voluntary as it was generous, had substituted himself in our place, by bearing our sins. Thus, then, the sacred writings point out the sufferings of Jesus, not merely as a representation and confirmation of our peace with Heaven, but as its foundation and source.

We by no means exclude other advantages, ascribed by Socinians to the death of Christ.

Without doubt, he thereby confirmed his own sincerity, and the truth of his mission.

But was it ever heard, that a false prophet, when forming a new sect, represented his own death, ignominious and soon approaching, as the *design* of his ministry, and established it as an article of his doctrine? Jesus, indeed, usually appealed to his miracles for the confirmation of his mission; but are the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, any where ascribed to his miracles, as they frequently are to his bloody death? For what was Jesus condemned? Not for teaching the truths of natural religion; but because he declared himself to be much superior to a human prophet, (see Sect. ix.) If the heavenly choir at his birth; if the Father's voice at his consecration; if his glorious appearance on the mount of transfiguration, had been clearly understood by the Jewish council and all the people; if the lightening which, under the former economy, appeared to confirm the mission of Moses and of Elias, had also appeared on his behalf, and caused him to be respected; if, more especially, he had gratified the prejudices of the Jews concerning the Messiah; if, with the legions of his Father's

angels,^a he had disturbed the Roman authority, and extended David's powerful kingdom; their unbelief would have been overcome; they would have eagerly received, and firmly confided in him: for they were always more allured by the loaves that were given them, and by the manna that dropped from heaven, than by his flesh and blood that were promised to them.^b A steady martyrdom was more necessary to confirm the ministry of the apostles, than his own; because their preaching was chiefly founded upon the truth of the important circumstances of the Saviour's death and exaltation, in regard to which, as they could not be deceived, so neither can their sincerity be called in question. But the Lord Jesus Christ had abundance of glorious means for establishing his doctrine. Besides, if nothing except a confirmation of his ministry was to have been effected by his death, he was under no necessity of dying on the accursed and shameful tree; and, particularly, under the appearance of public justice; which alienated the multitudes from him, offended his friends, and perplexed his followers.^c

^a Matt. xxvi. 53.

^b John vi. 26—66.

^c Mark xv. 11. Matt. xxvi. 31, 56. Luke xxii. 28.

With regard to the design of giving, by his sufferings, an example of love, of subjection to God, and of trust in him,—that we also respect. But for that purpose the extremity of disgrace was not necessary. Besides, his sufferings were accompanied with so much distress,^d and so many groans and tears, that very different objects must have been aimed at by them: otherwise he would not have excelled many martyrs in his cause. Further, if any apostle had foreseen, and had possessed the courage openly to predict his own death, for the confirmation of the truth, and an example to others, he might, on the principles of the Socinians, have said, with Christ, “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed?”^{dd}

But, notwithstanding the evidence produced from the word of God, arguments and objections are brought against a satisfaction by the substitution of another. If we are not mistaken, however, they may be sufficiently answered.* But much stronger arguments oppose the sentiment, that a holy God

^d Matt. xxvi. 37—39. Heb. v. 7. ^{dd} 2 Tim. iv. 6.
comp. John vi. 51—57. * See App. Note P.

may show himself favourable to, or indifferent about, the wilful violation of those laws and moral duties, from an obligation to which he never can release men ; or, to speak more plainly, and more in the usual style, that God may, and will, suffer sin to escape with impunity.

If, then, (to conclude in the language of the apostle, when expatiating on the glory of Christ,) the Son of God “hath, by himself, purged our sins ;”^e how perverse and injurious would it be, to limit the saving work of our Lord to his preaching? How inconsistent is it with such an idea, that, according to the common mode of speaking among christians, efficacious merits are ascribed to Christ, if these are understood in an unusual sense, only as relating to his doctrine and excellent character? In opposition to which, much might be advanced, (see Sect. ix.) How clearly, then, is the doctrine confirmed, which we maintained in Sect. x. ; namely, that Christ himself, in his person and work, is the source and author of our salvation? If the sufferings and death of Christ have merited saving blessings for all the numberless multi-

^e Heb. i. 3.

tudes that ever have believed, or ever shall believe in him ; if his comparatively short sufferings were the satisfying price of redemption, to deliver all those sinners from the fear of death and the wrath to come ; then does the infinite worth of his person and work, pass all understanding ; then we deduce from that most gracious deliverance, an important proof of his supernatural, and really divine excellence.



SECTION XII.

THE REVELATION OF CHRIST TO HIS CHURCH.

As the denial of Christ's true divinity entirely deprives the penitent sinner of the merit of his priestly work, and of all the advantages and consolations thence resulting ; so does it rob the church of his all-sufficient care and protection. Is he merely a human prophet, born in the fulness of time, to teach and to confirm his doctrine by a holy example and a painful death ? Then is the whole of his office long since concluded ; and he now enjoys in heaven the promised reward of his services. He may pray, in general, for

christians in a body ; but he ceases to do any more for our salvation on earth. This is directly contrary to those high and practical relations to the church, which he is every where represented as sustaining in the word of God ; and which, at the same time, establish his supreme perfection.

Not only the Jews, who believed in him during his residence here below ; but also all believers collected from among Jews and heathens after his ascension, constitute his church. They are all the called of Christ :^f they are his “elect, from the one end of the heaven to the other.”^g Does this barely mean, that he, by his instructions, which were of so short a continuance, opened the way to erect upon earth such an extensive and permanent society ? If any choose to understand it so, let them attend to what follows : All the members of the church are his property ; the sheep of which he is the shepherd.^h “Whether they live, they live to the Lord ; and whether they die, they die to the Lord ; whether they live, therefore, or die, they are the Lord’s.”ⁱ Their bodies are the

^f Rom. i. 6. ^g Matt. xxiv. 31. ^h John x. 12, 14.

ⁱ Rom. xv. 7, 8.

members of Christ, and must, therefore, not be abused.^k They are his property, as bought by him with a price ; for “ he hath purchased them with his own blood.”^l As they are the temple of the living God, who dwelleth in them ;^m so they are the Son’s own house, which he built,ⁿ and will yet build.^o This relation is, on both sides, attended with the most important consequences. They are *his* servants, and (which deserves particular attention) not the servants of men.^p “ Serving him and not men, they shall receive from him the reward of the inheritance.”^q On the other hand, they are said, by sin and unbelief, to tempt Christ :^r and “ they are chastened of him, that they may not be condemned with the world.”^s His active and salutary influence upon his church which is on the earth, is every where mentioned. When he was near his departure out of the world, he promised not to leave his people comfortless.^t He receiveth believers.^u He is with them to

^k 1 Cor. vi. 15. ^l 1 Cor. vi. 20. Acts xx. 28.

^m 1 Cor. iii. 16. 2 Cor vi. 16., &c.

ⁿ Heb. iii. 3—6.

^o Matt. xvi. 18.

^p 1 Cor. vii. 22, 23. Eph. vi. 6., &c.

^q Col. iii. 23, 24. ^r 1 Cor. x. 9. ^s 1 Cor. xi. 32.

^t John xii. 28.

^u Rom. xv. 7.

the end of the world.^v He was mighty among the Corinthians.^w As God, so likewise Christ, “is gracious to them;” or according to the English translation, “he forgives their sins.”^x He is their life.^y He is “the author and finisher of their faith.”^z He “comforts and establishes their hearts.”^a “They remain in him, and he in them.”^b Paul prays for his grace to be with them.^c To every one of them is “grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”^d In a word, as, “when enemies, they were reconciled to God by his death; so, when reconciled, they were saved by his life.”^e He shall save his people.”^f

Let us further consider the gracious relation of Jesus Christ to his church, under the relative terms, *King, Head, Shepherd, and Husband*; terms which, though in some degrees figurative, or improper, are nevertheless clear, full of meaning, and mutually support and strengthen one another. That he is

^v Matt. xxviii. 20. ^w 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

^x Col. iii. 13.; compare Eph. iv. 32. ^y Col. iii. 4.

^z Heb. xii. 2. ^a 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.

¹ Thess. iii. 12, 13. ^b 1 John ii. 24. ^c Gal. vi. 18.

^d Eph. iv. 7. ^e Rom. v. 10. ^f Matt. i. 21.

the *King* of his people, the angel Gabriel,^g and Christ himself,^h have informed us. Nor is this to be understood in a feeble sense, of only a certain external lustre, or a mere honorary title; but it implies great honour, founded in supreme power, in allusion to the absolute authority of eastern princes. He is “the prince of the kings of the earth.”ⁱ He is the head of all principality and power.^k He is the Lord, both of the dead and the living.”^l This supreme power is active, and constantly employed in governing his people; in doing them good; in protecting them against their enemies; and in crushing all opposition. “He shall put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.”^m Shall, then, the professors of the present times, and teachers of Christianity, hate him, now he is gone into a far country, to receive a kingdom; and send a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us!ⁿ If so, why do they continue

^g Luke i. 33. ^h Matt. xxv. 34, 40. John xviii. 36.

ⁱ Rev. i. 5. xix. 16., &c. ^k Col. ii. 10.

^l Rom. xiv. 9. ^m 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25.

ⁿ Luke xix. 12—14.

to join with us, in calling Christ, *our Lord*? Or is it now a name of no significancy? Did it only concern his followers, who lived in the time of his residence here below? The christian churches of old did not view it in this light. None can seriously object to all this; that to believers are promised the kingdom; a place upon a throne; and the judging of their enemies.^o For we need only to take a view of these promises, and we shall perceive the immense difference between the glory ascribed to believers, in fellowship and union with their Lord; and that of Christ himself, by and from whom they receive it.

Christ is the only *head* of the church, and they are *his body*; his members.^p This signifies, not only that he is far their superior; but also, that he affords them his powerful influence for their provision and support, for their direction and safety. Christ “is the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body.”^q He filleth all in all.”^r The fruit of his exaltation is, “the edifying of the body of Christ; that we may grow up unto him,

^o Matt. xxv. 34.; Luke xxii. 29., &c.

^p Col. i. 18, 24.

^q Eph. v. 23.

^r Eph. i. 23. iv. 7. Col. iii. 11.

who is the head : from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted, according to the effectual measure of every part, maketh increase of the body.”^s

Jésus was not only the *Shepherd* of his Jewish people in Palestine ; but, after his leaving the world, the dispersed in the lesser Asia, who were as sheep going astray, returned unto him ;^t the church of Ephesus was his flock ;^u the whole body of christians, to be called from among the Jews and heathens, were to be the sheep of one fold, and he their only shepherd.^v They could not be so called, merely from holding his doctrine. The friendly character of a *shepherd* conveys the idea of an active and busy life, spent in feeding, conducting, protecting, and caring for his flock. In a spiritual sense, this is emphatically true of Christ. He was to bring the sheep from among the heathens.^w He knows them all.^x He is “ the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.”^y But what does he procure for them, as their shepherd ? Nothing less than *eternal life* ;^z the *crown of glory*.^a The union of the

^s Eph. iv. 8—16.

^t 1 Pet. ii. 25.

^u Acts xx. 28.

^v John x. 16.

^w John x. 16.

^x John x. 27.

^y 1 Peter ii. 25.

^z John x. 28

^a 1 Peter v. 4.

church with her Redeemer, which is the source of so many spiritual blessings, is often represented by the tender image of a marriage covenant. He is her *Bridegroom*: not separated from her in any age by his distance from her in heaven ; but united to her most closely, for her safety, her ornament, her fruitfulness and advantage. Paul expresses in very emphatical language, this union so full of comfort, and lays it down as a foundation for recommending the reciprocal duties, in a happy matrimonial state.^b

All such relations of the Saviour to his church, furnish us with a threefold proof of his true divinity. For, *first*, To what man, what teacher, what mere creature, or middle being between God and us, do so much honour, and so much authority belong ; and consequently, so much subjection, dependance, service, and confidence from his people ; that the whole multitude of the elect from among all nations till the end of time, are his subjects and his flock ; who must all adhere to him as their only Head and Prince ? *Secondly*, Those powerful and saving exertions of Christ, the belief of which, far from being enthusiastic, is au-

^b Eph. v. 22—33.

thorised by Scripture, which represents them in a variety of views, presuppose Christ to possess omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence and grace. *Thirdly*, All his relations to God's church, are in the New Testament ascribed to him in language borrowed directly and expressly from the Old, where such relations are ascribed to *Jehovah* exclusively, and his severe displeasure testified against all that would divide them with any other. "Israel was his peculiar treasure, the rod of his inheritance."^c When they asked a king, they did evil in the sight of God.^d The *pastoral* care of God over them is highly extolled;^e and the profanation of his "holy covenant," so rich in love, is charged upon them as a reproach, and a mark of the highest ingratitude.^f Has, then, the Supreme Being *now* laid aside all his love to his people, or devolved the care of them upon a mere creature?

Against this argument it may be alleged, that it is said, that "When Christ shall have put down all rule and authority, he shall deliver up the kingdom to God the Father; and when all things shall be put under Him, then

^c Exod. xix. 5. Ps. cxiv. Jer. x. 16.

^d 1 Sam. viii. 7. xii. 12, 17. ^e Ps. xxiii. Ezek.

xxxiv. ^f Ezek. xvi. Hos. i—iii.

shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that God may be all in all.”^g Thus, his exalted relation to the church seems to be not permanent, but for a time ; not self-originated but derived, whilst his subjection to the Father seems to discover no supreme or divine power. The passage, it must be allowed, is difficult. But does it teach us, that Jesus, after having gradually subdued all opposition, and even subjected death itself to his dominion, shall on that very account, lose all authority? Must his power come to an end, by having reached the utmost design of its exertion? By no means. The same Paul declares, that he is “far above all principality, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.”^h At the end of time, “his glory shall be revealed”ⁱ in the most illustrious manner. Then shall “he sit upon the throne of his glory, and be glorified in his saints.”^k On that appearance is founded the hope of his people, that they “shall see him as he is.”^l Then “shall they have an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

^g 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. ^h Eph. i. 21.

ⁱ 1 Pet. iv. 13. Tit. ii. 13. Col. iii. 4.

^k Matt. xxv. 31. 2 Thess. i. 7—10. ^l John iii. 2, 3.

Christ ;”^m of whose kingdom, we are told, there “ shall be no end.”ⁿ As previous to that time, the royal majesty of Christ, and the Father’s delivering all things unto the Son,^o by no means annihilated or diminished^p the supremacy and everlasting sovereignty of the Father ; so, on the other hand, the delivering up of the kingdom to the Father by Christ, does not prevent our Lord, after having overcome, from “ sitting down with the Father on his throne.”^q That mutual resignation, therefore, can have regard only to a change in the administration of that kingdom of grace, which belongs to the Father and the Son, the particulars of which change are not revealed. To be “ *all in all*,” as God the Father shall then be, is a beautiful description of all-sufficiency, and by far too exalted for any creature ; but not for Christ, who is already such in the kingdom of grace.^{qq} With regard to the *subjection* mentioned, which has been the subject of so much thought and research, none can suppose that it is to be understood in so degrading a sense as that in which Christ is, just before, said “ to put down all rule and all

^m 2 Pet. i. 11.

ⁿ Luke i. 33.

^o Matt. xi. 27.

John iii. 35.

^p Rev. xi. 15. xii. 10. v. 1—14.

^q Rev. iii. 21.

^{qq} Col. iii. 11.

authority, and to put all things under his feet;" but it must be understood in consistency with the love of the Father to him ; with his faithful execution of the whole plan of redemption, and with his perfecting the kingdom of heaven. Besides which, we may direct our thoughts to the solemn account which he shall render to the Father, of his mediatorial work ; as also to that approbation and honour which he will receive from him."^r To maintain that the Prince of salvation is a mere creature, on account of that subjection at the end of the world, the manner of which is so obscurely revealed, is, to say the least, very unsatisfactory ; since, in respect of his created nature, his subjection will not then commence, as, in that nature, he is at this moment, and ever was, in all things necessarily subject to the Deity. But the true and undoubted subjection of Christ to the Father, we shall examine more particularly in Sect. xix.

^r Is. xlix. 6. John vi. 39, 40.

SECTION XIII.

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST OVER ALL GOD'S
AMBASSADORS.

IT pleased the Supreme Lord, in ancient times, to authorise and send forth chosen servants, to instruct fallen man in the way of salvation. Christ also is presented to us as the ambassador and servant of the Father, and that in a two-fold relation; he being "the Apostle," and also "the High Priest of our profession."^s This may create a suspicion, as if our Saviour, like other ambassadors and servants of God, was only a privileged creature, far above those, perhaps, but not in any respect equal to God. Our opponents suppose this to be fully confirmed by what our Saviour himself says, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, *whom thou hast sent*;"^t as he thereby seems to distinguish himself from the only true God, as the Father's ambassador. But if we consider this a little more attentively, we

^s Heb. iii. 1. viii. 1, 2.^t John xvii. 3.

shall find, that what Scripture teaches respecting his relation and superiority to all the servants of God, will direct us to the true sense of that sublime passage.

According to the divine testimony, Moses was highly privileged above other prophets.^u John the Baptist was superior to Moses; and all the apostles were superior to John.^v But all that variety of gifts, of privileges and of rank, ceases at once, and disappears, when compared with the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was above Apollos, Tychicus, Epaphras, and others; but yet it was *carnal* to regard such a small difference, when Christ came in question.^w John, who was the forerunner and kinsman of Jesus; who was acknowledged by Herod and all the people as a prophet, and of whom it was foretold, (a miracle accompanying the prediction) “He shall be great in the sight of the Lord,”^x—thought he could not sufficiently praise the Saviour’s excellence. “He who cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me; whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me? He

^u Numb. xii. 6—8.

^v Matt. xi. 9—14.

^w 1 Cor. iii. 1, 4, 5. Col. iv. 7.

^x Luke i. 15.

must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from heaven is above all.”^y

They are all jointly subjected to the service of Christ. As they are the ministers of God,^z so are they “the ministers and servants of Christ.”^a They must serve the Lord Jesus Christ.^b “Be not ye called many masters, for one is your master, even Christ.^c Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am.”^d They are called his *soldiers*.^e All teachers must attend to this, lest, through unfaithfulness, they should “deny the Lord that bought them.”^f They have their mission, their saving message, and their authority from Christ. They are every-where called “the apostles of Jesus Christ.” Paul “received his ministry from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”^g The Lord gave him his authority.^h He is *the door* by which all the shepherds come into the sheep-fold.ⁱ We must not from such passages, consider the Lord Jesus barely as a minister of state, by

^y John i. 27—30. iii. 30—36. ^z 2 Cor. vi. 4.

^a Col. iv. 7—12. 1 Tim. iv. 6, &c. ^b Rom. xvi. 18.

^c Matt. xxiii. 8, 10. ^d John xiii. 13.

^e 2 Tim. ii. 3. ^f 2 Pet. ii. 1.

^g 2 Pet. iii. 2. Acts xx. 24. ^h 2 Cor. x. 5—8.

John x. 1—9.

whom the royal ambassadors receive commands ; but which they receive in the name of the prince. Some passages will bear this interpretation. For example, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God.”^k Paul “received *by* Christ, grace and apostleship.”^l But that grace he often ascribes to Christ himself ;^m and the Saviour is represented in this authority, as in fellowship with the Father, “Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father.”ⁿ “James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ.”^o The giving of apostles, prophets, and teachers,^p is ascribed equally to God and to Christ. Concerning his supreme authority over his ministering servants, read Matt. x. 1—33. Acts xxvi. 15—19. Rev. ii. and iii. For this reason he is represented emblematically, as holding the stars of the churches in his right hand.^q He is “the nobleman that went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom and to return ; who called his servants, and delivered unto

^k Col. i. 1. ^l Rom. i. 5. ^m 2 Cor. xii. 9.

ⁿ Gal. i. 1. 1 Tim. i. 1. ^o James i. 1.

^p 1 Cor. xii. 4, 6, 28. Eph. iv. 11.

^q Rev. i. 20. ii. 1.

them his goods, and said, Occupy till I come.”^r Ambassadors speak and act in the name of the power that sends them. But it was in the name of *Christ*, that the ambassadors of whom we speak, executed their embassy ; “ We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”^s In the name of Jesus, they preached repentance and remission of sins ; they exhorted,^t they baptised,^u and administered the Lord’s supper.^v His faithful servants carefully avoided doing any thing of this kind in their *own name*.^w The miracles wrought by the apostles were also performed in the name of Christ ; and the workers of them expressly denied that they were done by their own virtue or power.^x

The divinity of the glorious Mediator is fully evident from this, that he directs his servants on earth, and qualifies them for their important offices.^y He promises to give them a “ mouth and wisdom, which all their ad-

^r Luke xix. 12, 13. Matt. xxv. 14. xxiv. 45.

^s 2 Cor. v. 20.

^t Luke xxiv. 47.

^u Acts ix. 29. 2 Thess. iii. 6. Matt. xxviii. 19.

^v 1 Cor. xi. 23.

^w 1 Cor. i. 13—15.

^x Acts iii. 12—16. iv. 10. xvi. 18.

^y See Acts xxii. 17—21. xxiii. 11. 1 Thess. iii. 11.

versaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist."^z "If ye shall ask any thing in my name," says he, "I will do it."^a He sent Paul, and promised to deliver him from the Jews and Gentiles.^b "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."^c Paul could "do all things through Christ strengthening him."^d The great effect of the apostles' preaching and their miracles, could not, certainly, be ascribed to their own, but to a divine power. And to whose power? They preached every where "*the Lord (Christ) working with them*, and confirming the word, with signs following."^e Lydia heard the word preached, and "*the Lord opened her heart.*"^f John baptized with water: Jesus with the Holy Ghost.^g Peter said, "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole."^h Would it not have been unreasonable, if Eneas had replied thus, "No; it is not Jesus Christ, who is only a glorified spirit; but his Father that maketh me whole, for the confirmation of the doctrine which Christ formerly published." Paul dar-

^z Luke xxi. 15. comp. Exod. iv. 12, 15.

^a John xiv. 13, 14.

^b Acts xxvi. 16, 17.

^c 2 Cor. xii. 9.

^d Phil. iv. 13.

^e Mark xvi. 20.

^f Acts xvi. 14.

^g Matt. iii. 11.

^h Acts ix. 34.

ed not "to speak of any of those things which Christ had not wrought by him, to make the Gentiles obedient ; by word and deed."ⁱ For this reason it was, that they prayed so often to Christ, that he would bless their ministry, and bestow his grace upon the churches.^k

Once more (and this may decide the point), Christ himself is the *object*, the *matter*, and the *scope* of their united mission and doctrine. They preached not themselves, nor any human teachers, however eminent. Mark preached not Peter, nor Timothy, Paul, though his spiritual father: but they all preached CHRIST. What is meant by this, we have already seen. Their ministry was instituted on his account, that they might "be witnesses of him to the uttermost parts of the earth."^l They were to confess him before men.^m "We preach not ourselves," was their language, "but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves, your servants for Jesus' sake."ⁿ The Saviour says of Paul, "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's

ⁱ Rom. xv. 18, 19.

^k Phil. iv. 23, &c.

^l Acts i. 8.

^m Matt. x. 32.

ⁿ 2 Cor. iv. 5.

sake.”^o Philip preached “the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ.”^{oo} “They are unfaithful servants who seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.”^p So, on the other hand, their happy converts had learned, not Paul or any other human teachers, but *Christ*. The Ephesians were taught the truth, and were “light,” not in the apostle, but “in the Lord.”^q Christ then differs from all other teachers, just as the light differs from those who merely exhibit it. John was not “that light, but he was sent to bear witness of the light.”^r

Nor will Christ ever forbear to maintain his high authority. He will judge, concerning the ministry of his servants; pronounce his sentence upon them, and give to every one his reward. For after a long time, the lord of the servants unto whom he had delivered his goods, and had committed various talents, shall come again and reckon with them.^s “Watch ye, therefore,” said he to his disciples, “and pray always that ye may be

^o Acts ix. 15, 16.

^p Phil ii. 21.

^r John i. 7—9.

^{oo} Acts viii. 12.

^q Eph. iv. 20, 21. v. 8.

^s Matt. xxv. 14—30.

accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man.”^t “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,” says Paul, “we persuade men;” and elsewhere, “with me it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you or of man’s judgment. He that judgeth me is the Lord Christ,” as the connection shews.^u Timothy was thus exhorted to faithfulness, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he will deny us; if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.”^v The apostle having fought the good fight, expected “the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, would give him in the day of his appearing.”^w

A comparison of the Lord Jesus Christ with his own, and his Father’s servants; and the relations in which he stands to them, (as they have been considered in several views), which are confirmed by what Jesus and they themselves have said; afford us a proof of such abilities, of such operations, of such honour, and of such authority, as exalt him above all finite beings. We rejoice that our

^t Luke xxi. 36. ^u 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. 1 Cor. iv. 3—5.

^v 2 Tim. ii. 12, 13.

^w 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

high estimation of Christ, meets, if we be not mistaken, with the fullest concurrence of those faithful servants of God, by whose infallible testimony we know Christ, and was the fundamental doctrine of their teaching. They every where endeavoured, as far as they were able, to exalt Christ above themselves; to reverence him as their Lord; and to give us the most instructive examples of all that honour and respect, which, as we concluded in Sect. viii., establish his true divinity. Let us now recollect what we have already observed, with regard to John the Baptist. Paul's *whole life was Christ*:* and had the intended conciseness of this treatise permitted, we might have shown, from almost every paragraph of his reasonings and epistles, that his thoughts, his love, his fortitude, and his gratitude were all directed to Christ his Lord. Would to God we could excite the emulation of those, who, without such affections, would endeavour to reduce Christianity to its ancient simplicity! Did not all the apostles and their immediate successors, seek their own salvation in Christ, and expect it from him? Did they not call upon him in difficulty and distress,

* Phil. i. 21. Gal. ii. 20.

exercise themselves in his fear, and ascribe to him all the success of their ministry? They “laboured, striving according to his working that wrought in them mightily.”^{xx} Did they not give up every thing for him, and hazard their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?”^y The “*prisoner* of Jesus Christ,” was esteemed a title of honour by the wise ambassador of the cross. His glorying above others was, that he as a minister of Christ was in stripes more abundant, in prisons, in deaths, and in sufferings of every kind more frequent.^z Because the strength of Christ was “made perfect in his weakness,” he took pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake.”^a No afflictions moved him; “neither,” says he, “count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.”^b When “Peter and the apostles were beaten, they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name; and they ceas-

^{xx} Col. i. 29.

^y Acts xv. 26.

^z Eph. iii. 1. Philemon 9. 2 Cor. xi. 23—30.

^a 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

^b Acts xx. 24. xxi. 13.

Phil. ii. 30.

ed not to preach Jesus.”^c Why, then, did those enlightened men thus esteem their Lord?

The divine superiority of Christ, compared with other ambassadors of God, appears in the totally different relations which he and they bear to the church. Moses and Christ were both faithful to him that had appointed them.^d But with how much difference?—“Moses as a *servant* in God’s house ; Christ as a *son* over his own house ; whose house are we.”^e A difference like that between a part of a house or family, and the builder or proprietor of that house. “For Christ was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who buildeth the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some one, but he that built all things is God.”^f The reasoning in these words is not very common, and has received several explications. But, however uncommon it may be, it contains, in our opinion, agreeably to its connection and scope, an implicit acknowledgment of our Lord’s divinity. The elders, and witnesses of the suffering of Christ, feed the flock of God, but not as being lords over God’s heritage, while

^c Acts v. 29, 40—42.

^d Heb. iii. 2.

^e Heb. iii. 5, 6.

^f Heb. iii. 3, 4.

Christ is "the chief shepherd,^g and he to whom the sheep belong."^h "They feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."ⁱ They are all "given by the Lord Jesus for the edifying of the body of Christ."^k Their labour tends to this, "that Christ may be formed" in his people.^l "Him (say they) we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."^m Christ alone, without allowing any to have a share with him in the relation, is, as we have already seen, the bridegroom, the husband, and the Lord of the church. But his illustrious forerunner was only the friend of the bridegroom; to whom it was granted as an honour, even "to rejoice because of the bridegroom."ⁿ All other faithful teachers are instrumental in preparing the church for her husband, Christ.^o In a word, respecting his relation to the church, the Saviour differs as much from them, as he does from the means employed for their salvation. Or "is Christ divided? Was Paul

^g 1 Pet. v. 2—4.

^h John x. 11—16

ⁱ Acts xx. 28. John xxi. 15—17. ^k Eph. iv. 11, 12.

^l Gal. iv. 19. ^m Col. i. 28. ⁿ John iii. 28—31.

^o 2 Cor. xi. 2.

crucified for you? or were you baptised in the name of Paul? Who then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man.”^p

Let us also consider the divine authority of Christ over the angels. His supreme power, and his redeeming conquests, over Satan and his angels are mentioned frequently and at large;^q and he is likewise to be their judge.^r But as many in these times will not hear of evil angels, let us attend to the good angels,—those powerful spirits who are sent to execute the great plans of God’s counsel. How can Christ be considered as a mere creature, if he be the Lord of angels? How often were they dispatched to serve him in his state of humiliation on earth? “Angels and authorities are made subject to him.”^s They are his angels or messengers;^t and a time is coming, “when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.”^u It must not be imagined that Christ excels the angels only as to the degree of his qualifica-

^p 1 Cor. iii. 5. i. 13.

^q Matt. xii. 24—30.

Luke x. 17, 18. Heb. ii. 14. 1 John iii. 8.

^r Matt. viii. 29. Jude 6. ^s 1 Pet. iii. 22. Phil. ii. 10

^t Matt. xvi. 27. xxiv. 31. Rev. i. 1. ^u 2 Thess. i. 7.

tions, or in point of precedency, as the chief created angel. The apostle assigns a very different reason for his pre-eminence: For he informs us, that while God calls the angels "his ministers," he says to Jesus, "thou art my Son;" and again, "thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."^v "But to which of the angels said he at any time, sit on my right hand."^w Those richly endued messengers of heaven must own, with humility, their infinite distance from the glory of the Son of God, when they all in a body, without distinction of ranks, *worship him*.^x On this account they are allowed no claim to our adoration; as that would not be holding the head.^y The difference, then, between Christ and the angels, is the difference between the Saviour himself, and those "ministering spirits, which are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;"^z a difference as great as we have seen to subsist between Christ and his apostles. For how high soever angels are above human teachers, yet when both come into comparison with Christ, their superiority ceases to be perceptible. An angel himself hath said, "I am thy fellow-servant, and of

^v Heb. i. 5, 7, 8.

^w ver. 13.

^x ver. 6.

^y Col. ii. 18, 19.

Rev. xxii. 9.

^z Heb. i. 14.

thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.^a

Now, by comparing all that has been said, particularly in this section, with the declaration of Jesus (John xvii. 3.) above mentioned, it is evident, that *to be sent by the Father*, is far from being inconsistent with his true divinity. For, having fellowship with the Father in his perfections, working, and honour, he is infinitely exalted above all other ambassadors of God. It was the express good pleasure of God, in the fulness of time, to take a course quite different from that of former ages. It pleased God to reveal himself and his grace to mankind, in a more illustrious manner; so as to afford them richer consolation, and lay them under greater obligations, by sending an ambassador whose relation to the Father, as well as to the church, was totally different and infinitely superior. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his SON."^b That great difference was published "from the excellent glory," in the

^a Rev. xix. 10.

^b Heb. i. 1., &c.

hearing of teachers both of the Old and New Testament times.^c “Last of all, he sent unto them his Son, saying, They will reverence my Son.”^d Jesus himself shews in the words objected against us, his dignity and his fellowship with the Father; by making our eternal life consist in the knowledge, not of the Father only, but also of the Son himself,—not merely as a source of instruction (for that might be also said of the apostle) but as the ground and source of salvation, (see Sect. x.) He evidently asserts his own power, when, in the second verse, he calls the dignity ascribed to him, “a power over all flesh that he should (not barely *reveal*, but) *give* eternal life to as many as were given him of the Father.” In the fifth verse he also teaches us, that his being *sent*, supposes the high “glory which he had with the Father, even before the world was.”

But does not Jesus acknowledge (which is the principal thing) that the Father is *the only true God*, in opposition to himself as his ambassador? When Socinus and his followers drew this conclusion from the text, they were obliged to give up an idea, of which, on other

^c Matt. xvii. 5. 2 Peter i. 16, 17. ^d Matt. xxi. 37.

occasions they are extremely fond ; viz. That the term *God*, in sacred language, does not express the high and distinguishing *nature* of the Supreme Being ; but is a name of *authority* and *excellence*. For, one of these two things must follow : If that name signify an high *authority*, only in whatever manner they intend that to be ascribed to Christ under this name, they cannot here appropriate the only true Godhead to the Father, exclusively of the Son ; and so the objection falls. But, if they here understand, by the name *God*, the eternal and infinite Being only ; it is an implicit acknowledgement of our proof of Christ's divinity, drawn from that name being so expressly given to him. We will not avail ourselves of the translation adopted by some, who understand it in the following manner : “ This is eternal life, that thou art the only true God, as also Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” We abide by the usual sense, that the eternal salvation of men depends upon the due acknowledgement of the Father, as the only true God, and of Christ as the Saviour sent by him. But that distinction, which was long since observed, still remains valid : It is quite a different thing to say, “ The Father is the *only* true God,” which

we respectfully own,—and to say, “The Father *alone* is the true God,” which is not in the text. The intention of our Saviour is to exhibit the Father as the *only true God* in contrast with all *false gods*, the worship of whom was to be entirely abolished by the gospel, that the name of God might be one through the whole earth: but not in contrast with *himself*, in whose power it is to bestow eternal life. God, the Father, is called “the blessed and *only* Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;”^e but it should not be doubted that this belongs also to Christ. Paul determined “to know nothing save Jesus Christ;”^f that is, not exclusive of the Father, but of all created powers from whom salvation might be sought. To which we may add, that remarkable saying of John, concerning Jesus Christ, “This is *the true God*.”^g Now, for the Saviour, in the verse before us, to describe himself in a limited sense as sent by the Father, is natural; since, as Mediator, who was to perform his work upon earth in the low state of humanity, he here desires his Father’s glorifying approba-

^e 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

^f 1 Cor. ii. 2.

^g 1 John v. 20. compare John i. 1.

tion : while he, nevertheless, in this sublime prayer, avowedly claims to himself such prerogatives, as are unsuitable in the mouth of any mere creature.

But, let us consider, a little more particularly, the forementioned assertion of the angel. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy ;" i.e. of divine revelation, both in early and later times.

SECTION XIV.

CHRIST THE SPIRIT OF ANCIENT PROPHECY.

IF Christ, who is not a mere creature, but the mighty Saviour of Adam's apostate seed, be the principal subject of the doctrine of salvation ; and if before his incarnation, he had an existence which never commenced ; then, certainly he could not be unknown to those that were honoured with a divine revelation, before the time of the gospel. Christian divines have generally taken this for granted ; and are pleased with collecting, from the books of the Old Testament, and from the earliest ages, the

important information concerning him ; which information became gradually stronger and clearer as time advanced. In the application of texts to him, some have been more free, and others more sparing.

Those who deny the divinity of Jesus, have thought much more meanly of the doctrine of the Old Testament, supposing that they can find in it but little of Christ or of his gospel. The religion of the patriarchs, and of the Israelites, was never more despised than by some of our modern teachers. The writings of the prophets, say they, are so involved, that though we do our utmost, with the assistance of skill in languages, and in the art of poetry, to connect them, and to unfold their meaning, they will be still obscure. The passages produced from them, which are applied to Christ and his redemption, appear to have no such design. But he and his apostles, by making an artful use of the attachment of the Jews to prophetic language, and of their prejudices respecting the Messiah who was to come ; have given that particular turn to them. As to the law of ceremonies, it was only a political regulation about long established customs, or an imitation of what was practised by renowned nations.—These objectors proceed still farther, and say, the patri-

archs were plain men, and keepers of cattle; who, with regard to invisible things, were entirely in a state of childish simplicity. The first book of Moses was collected not only from ancient memorials, but from writings of uncertain authority ; as also from ancient traditionary reports, or the songs of nations, and is poetical and embellished. Thus the earliest informations concerning mankind, are not founded on true historical facts.—Some new divines fall in with the supposition, that the first men, naturally rude and ignorant, did not for a long time unite in society ; arrived slowly to the use of speech ; and were obliged to be instructed in the knowledge of God, in a gradual manner, and by the assistance of sensible images and appearances. Moses, say they, could make nothing of the Israelites, except by prescribing a religious service, which was emblematical, and adapted to give them constant employment. The most intelligent of that people might hope for farther light ; but how little could pure and rational religion be thereby inculcated on their minds ! How much less the mystery of a divine Redeemer, who was to come and make atonement for sins of ancient and later times ; together with other doctrines of a similar nature !

Into what a situation are we now come ! To renounce an important and well-confirmed article of belief, shall we be obliged to credit loose principles, and to embrace the absurdities of Epicurus concerning the origin of society ? Is it philosophical, is it agreeable to the constitution, and for the honour of reasonable men ? Is it consistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, to make men first wander about for a long time in a state of speechless barbarity ; to leave those reasonable men, nevertheless, to invent language of themselves ; and then to let them live for ages in childish ignorance ? Is there so much information and utility to be found, in doing what we can, to lose with the literal history of Genesis, all the advantage by which the sacred history is so superior to all others ; and to extinguish all the light which it throws upon the condition of man, the origin of good and evil, the rise of nations, geography, chronology, and the like ?

That the knowledge of God, and the doctrine of salvation, were revealed to mankind by degrees, is very certain. But was it necessary the Deity should have a course of ages, in which to instruct men so far in the arts and sciences, as we teach our children in the space of fourteen or sixteen years ? Is it

in our power to read the most ancient records in the world ; the history of the patriarchs, or the book of Job ; without admiring the profound knowledge, the strong faith, and the enlightened piety of the friends of God ? Read attentively, for instance, Job xxxi., Gen. xviii., with similar passages ; and then compare them with the fables of the gods and heroes of Homer, or of other heathen authors, by which some are inclined to improve our skill in the interpretation of Scripture, and in critical learning. I write not against those who have, in our days, with directly evil intentions, reviled the most noble piety of Abraham, or the religion of others ; but I advert rather, to such as are more moderate ; and though they differ from us, do yet esteem the sacred writings.

That, in the Old Testament, a saving light, and a powerful deliverance, by an illustrious person from Abraham's, from Jacob's, from David's line, were predicted, and became the ground of comfortable expectation, cannot be denied by careful enquirers, and has been often demonstrated. Some predictions are clear, while many other passages, applied to Christ, are either more doubtful, or, being less

evident of themselves, are capable of being established, only on the foundation of the former. In the fulness of time, the expectation of the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed of God, was, by way of excellence, an acknowledged doctrine among the Jews;^h not contrived in Babylon, or in the schools of the Jews, but found in the old prophetic Scriptures.ⁱ It was generally known even to the Samaritans, who followed neither the Jewish rabbies nor the later prophets; who also expected, in the Messiah not only a deliverer from the Roman yoke, but one who was to explain and establish the true religion, and who was to be the Saviour of the world.^k

All doubt with regard to Christ being the spirit of ancient prophecy, is entirely removed by his own doctrine, and that of his apostles. We do not deny, that many expressions of the Old Testament, are applied to quite different things in the New. The Revelation of John is full of such instances. This occasions enquiry, and various opinions, concerning a num-

^h Luke ii. 10, 11, 26, 38. John i. 42. xi. 27. Matt. ii. 4, 6. ⁱ Luke i. 67—75. John i. 46. vii. 42.

^k John iv. 25, 29, 42.

ber of places. Nevertheless, Christ and the apostles evince in the clearest manner, that Moses and the apostles had predicted the Messiah, as also his sufferings and glory.¹ The Saviour himself has shown it on several occasions;^m and likewise the apostles.ⁿ Nor were they afraid to rest their whole doctrine on this point.^o According to their most respectable affirmation, “Abraham saw the day of Christ, and was glad.^p Prophets, righteous men, and kings desired to see it.”^q The ancient saints, from the days of Abel, lived in expectation of salvation, and when dead, obtained it *by faith* in the promises.^r The gospel was also then preached, by which some “entered into the rest” of God’s people; and others “could not, because of unbelief.”^s They also expressly teach us, that David and other prophets fully understood what was suggested to them in their predictions.^t Those promises,

¹ Matt. xxvi. 24. Acts iii. 18—26. vii. 52. x. 43. xxvi. 22, 23. xxviii. 23. 1 Pet. i. 10—12.

^m Matt. xxi. 42. Luke iv. 17—22. xxiv. 27, 44, 45.

ⁿ Acts ii. 16—35. viii. 32—35. ^o John v. 39, 46. Acts xxvi. 27. ^p John viii. 56. ^q Matt. xiii. 16, 17. 1 Pet. i. 10—12. Luke x. 24. ^r Heb xi.

^s Heb. iii, 7. iv. 11.

^t Acts ii. 30, 31.

1 Pet. i. 10—12.

therefore, might be propagated by word of mouth, and then collected and preserved in the schools.^u It is therefore an erroneous doctrine to maintain, in opposition to Christ, That not one prophecy, being well considered, obliges us to refer it to him, and carefully to enquire whence the expectation of a Messiah arose.

Those promises were confirmed by, and subsisted in, a remarkable connection with God's peculiar government of Abraham's house, and particularly of Israel. For what purpose were those political laws enacted, according to which that people were obliged to live so sequestered, and confined to the inheritance of Canaan;—laws by which all strangers were so strongly prohibited from acquiring any permanent possession among them; by which the distinction of tribes and families was preserved; while, from time to time, new prophets arose, and old prophecies were fulfilled? The answer is easy, if this was necessary to prepare the way for, and to keep up a lively confidence in, the accomplishment of a capital promise respecting the Deliverer to arise out of Jacob; who was to be known by the cir-

^u Acts iii. 24.; compare 1 Sam. xix. 20.

cumstances of his coming, and was to remove that wall of separation between Jews and heathens, who were all to be blessed in the seed of Abraham. What utility or wisdom was there in the Old Testament ceremonies, if all prefiguration and emblematical representation of a true and perfect atonement be taken from them? Were they instituted to make people believe that God would be reconciled by the blood of bulls and of goats? Was it to make them resemble, and to mingle with the Egyptians, or other heathen nations, from whom they were so miraculously separated, and whom they were so strictly forbidden to imitate in their worship, or to have any intercourse with them? It was not, surely, to load with useless burdens and expences, that very people who had received such particular marks of the divine favour, nor from caprice, without any important view. Is it suitable to supreme wisdom and goodness, to add such severe *punishments* to arbitrary and unprofitable prescriptions? Is it consistent with the dignity of God's government, to burden his favourite people, on pain of banishment and of death, with such a laborious but unmeaning service? To what difficulties should we not be reduced, were we to deny that only worthy

intention which is so expressly confirmed to us in the New Testament? There we are taught, that in the Jewish ceremonies there was “a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ;”^v a shadow of good things to come, “till the time of reformation, when the High Priest should come for the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first Testament;”^w and that the change of that religion was not a chasm in the ways of God, a repeal of the plan of the Lawgiver, which was formerly useless, which had no connection with the following, but the fulfilling or perfecting of the preceding; so that the old law was of use to the people of God, as “a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, and for the bringing in of a better hope.”^x In this view, how does every thing rise in worth! How significant are many sayings and allusions of the ancient believers! What a connected whole, and what a respectable plan, do the several periods and families of God’s church constitute! With what composure may we leave to that acknowledged wisdom of God, the further circumstances with which it has

^v Col. ii. 17.

^w Heb. ix. and x.

^x Gal. iii. and iv. Heb. vii. 19. xi. 39, 40. John i. 29.

limited the principal contents of the ceremonial law of Moses, which leaves us at liberty to reflect upon it with moderation ! How important our privilege, to know that it is fulfilled ; and to “ have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, there to appear in the presence of God for us !”^y

Hence the doctrine of our Lord’s divinity is variously confirmed. For, first, to no creature does such honour belong, that, for a course of ages, the whole family of the church, the institution of God’s worship, the privileges of God’s covenant, the chain of God’s declarations and promises, should be invariably directed to him, and terminate in him. Secondly, the ancient servants of God regarded the expected Redeemer as the object of those promises, for the sake of which they confessed, that they “ were pilgrims and strangers on the earth.” But what advantage or consolation, what joyful expectation, would they have had from his being announced to them, before his actual appearance ; or how would the burden of emblematical ceremonies have been compensated ; if he was to be a teacher only, or a king, for later times ; when, at his

appearance, the inheritance of Canaan, and the privileges of their posterity above the nations, were to cease ; if they had not been warranted to consider their own salvation as founded in the Messiah ? To this no answer can be given, unless Christ be more than a mere creature ; unless he was the Saviour of those who, before his coming in the flesh, had entered into rest. It is only in the acknowledgement of this, that there are sense, spirit, and life, in the original promise, in Abraham's blessing, or in Jacob's and David's dying speeches.^z Thirdly, in those places of the Old Testament, where several predictions concerning the salvation of the world, are on good grounds, acknowledged ; divines have found such names, qualities, works, and honours ascribed to him, as prove his divine greatness, and perfectly account for the strong faith of the fathers. But the particular citation of those passages, the arranging of them, and the opposing of them to other interpretations, would require a larger treatise than is consistent with our design.

We must not, however, omit observing, that he whose saving coming in the flesh, and spi-

^z Gen. iii. 15. xii. 3. xlix. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—5.

ritual deliverance, were predicted, actually existed in ancient times, and was then the object of the fathers' religious homage. It is also certain, that under the Theocracy or the immediate government of God, he was the Lord of Israel's greatest kings, and was confessed as such in one of David's devout Psalms.* A variety of scripture passages shows, that in all the successive ages of the Old Testament, from Abraham to Malachi, a divine ambassador was known to the ancient church, who was invested with the highest perfection and authority, and was the protector of the people of God. That angel of the Lord called to Abraham out of heaven, and said, "now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thine only son from me."^a To Jacob he said, "I am the God of Bethel."^b Jacob was redeemed by him from all evil, and prayed to him for a blessing upon his children.^c He was "the Lord God who said to Moses, I am the God

* Psalm cx. 1. We find no reason to depart from the explication, so significant, and suited to the words, which is given of this place by the Saviour, (Matt. xxii. 43—45.) for that of fallible interpreters.

^a Gen. xxii. 11, 12.

^b Gen xxxi. 11—13.

^c Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.

of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob :”^d who also spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai.^e He was Israel’s great conductor out of Egypt, and their mighty Saviour :^f concerning whom it was the express command of God ; “obey his voice and provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions ; for my name is in him.”^g That angel said, “I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you into the land which I swore unto your father ; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.”^h He is called the angel of God’s presence, who saved Israel ;ⁱ the Lord, who was sent from the Lord, and was to dwell in Zion ;^k the messenger of the covenant ; the Lord, who was sought and was suddenly to come to his temple,” and therefore was the Lord of God’s temple.^l The bare citation of these passages, and the mutual support they give to one another, (not to mention others) totally remove the exceptions which have been made against them. The last of these texts, and other reasons,

^d Exod. iii. 2—14. Acts vii. 30—35. ^e Acts vii. 38.

^f Exod. xiv. 19. xxiii. 20. ^g Exod. xxiii. 21.

^h Judges ii. 1—4. ⁱ Isa. lxiii. 9. ^k Zech. ii. 8—10.
comp. iii. 1—7. ^l Mal. iii. 1.

show that the uncreated angel is Christ, who thus made himself known of old, as Israel's deliverer. This, too, gives us a key to various passages, which would otherwise have no proper signification. It shows us how Moses "esteemed the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;"^m how the voice of Christ then shook the earth;ⁿ how Christ was the builder and Lord, not first of the gospel church by his coming in the flesh; but of the whole house of God, in which Moses was formerly a servant;^o how the perverse Israelites, notwithstanding the above warning, not to provoke the angel of the Lord,^p tempted Christ in the wilderness;^q and so on.

^m Heb. xi. 26.

ⁿ Heb. xii. 25, 26. comp. Exod.

xix. 16—18. Acts vii. 38.

^o Heb. iii. 3—5.

^p Exod. xxiii. 21.

^q 1 Cor. x. 9. comp. Numb. xxi. 5, 6. Heb. iii. 7—9. comp. Ps. xcv. 7—9. The reading τὸν χρίστον (1 Cor. x. 9.) is just. Besides, other proofs, the citation of Irenæus, which is both simple and suited to the connection, is of much more weight, than the inconsistent information of Epiphanius, concerning whose account of the matter so much has been said. Consider, further, the import of verse the fourth; the rock, of which Israel drank, was Christ.

To these we might add some other proofs by which divines have established, from the Old Testament, a plurality of persons in the Godhead. Among these, some appear to me, at least, to admit no other tolerable sense ; and when compared with the forementioned reasons seem to confirm our demonstration.* It is therefore surprising that any divines, who are convinced of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from the New Testament, should declare they can find no trace of it in the Old.



SECTION XV.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

WE have already produced a great number of texts, which appear, each by itself, and still more strongly when united, to confute the opinion of Socinus ; many of which seem also to overturn that of Arius, and of those

* The reader will find a Thesaurus of these in Dr Smith's *Scrip. Test.* vol. i.—ED.

who follow him, whether more nearly or at a distance ;—passages, therefore, which demand our belief in the true divinity of Jesus. To deprive those Scriptures of the proofs which they contain, what forced interpretations have often been put upon them ; and what far-fetch-ed objections have been made to them ! What assistance has been borrowed from every art and science to avoid, with any decent appearance, explications that are most clear, and supported by the criticisms of learned men ! How eagerly is an objection, or an unusual interpretation, of any distinguished writer against one or more of those proofs, embraced ! But, however numerous the passages are from which the divinity of the Saviour cannot be sufficiently demonstrated ; yet from the acknowledgement of this doctrine, what superior energy, and what an exalted sense, quite suited to the doctrine of salvation, do they receive, while, by the opposite opinion, they become both feeble and obscure ! For instance, “ To have the Son, and to have life in him ;^r to abide in him ;^s to stand fast in the Lord ;^t to be strong in the grace that is

^r 1 John v. 11, 12.

^s 1 John ii. 6, 28.

^t 1 Thess. iii. 8.

in Christ Jesus ;^u the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ ;^v to thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.^w No man knoweth the Son but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."^{ww}

We do not wish to force on the word of God any construction suited to our taste, which is not either demonstrable in itself, or confirmed by parallel places ; for that would not be a safe foundation on which to build our religion and our hopes. But, when any mode of interpretation weakens, obscures, and destroys those things in the word of God, which the sacred writers expressly declare are not only to be found in it, but constitute the power and excellence of the gospel ; then must such mode of interpretation stand for nothing. This is precisely the case with the denial of Christ's true divinity, and with the interpretation of Scripture agreeable to that opinion.

The gospel is highly esteemed by the apostles, for this reason, That its doctrine respect-

^u 2 Tim. ii. 1. ^v Phil. i. 11. ^w Rom. vii. 25.

^{ww} Matt. xi. 27.

ing Christ is *a mystery*, equally important and profound, which could be made known unto men by no other source of information. John says, "We bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us."^x Paul calls the gospel, "the mystery of Christ,"^y which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ the hope of glory.^z The mystery of God the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:^a We speak wisdom among them that are perfect—the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."^b The apostle is elsewhere so full of this doctrine of

^x 1 John i. 2.^y Col. iv. 3.^z Col. i. 26—28.^a Col. ii. 2, 3.^b 1 Cor. ii. 6—9.

redemption, that he appears like one who thinks he cannot boast too much of it.^c Now, if we apprehend the many proofs already adduced, according to the proper force of the expressions, and elucidated by the connection, and by similar phrases ; if we believe that the eternal Son of God became flesh, that he made satisfaction for our sins by his death, and thereby opened a way to salvation for Jews and heathens ; then indeed, we find mysteries, as sublime as they are full of grace, which, without revelation, could never have been conceived by the mind of man. Then we find sufficient reason for all that solemn apparatus of preceding prophecies, emblematical shadows, the mission of a teacher without sin, his supernatural birth, the appearances of angels, heavenly voices, miraculous cures, the raising of the dead, the convulsion and mourning of nature at his death, his resurrection from the grave, his visible ascension to heaven, the suddenly qualifying of illiterate fishermen to instruct the world, and the like ; all which were intended to excite a reverential belief of sublime doctrines, of mysteries which reason could not teach, and for

^c Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Eph. i. 9, 10. iii. 8, 9.

which the divine testimony ought to be undoubted. But what unheard-of mystery is there in Jesus Christ, if he be a mere creature, and his work only to instruct in the moral duties, which were not wholly unknown to Jews and heathens? Were we to have a gospel without mysteries; were we to bring down Christianity to a level with what modern divines can find by their philosophy; it would no longer be that gospel which Christ and his apostles taught. These men would exclude mysteries from the gospel: and, indeed, if Christ be not really God, nor his incarnation and deep humiliation, the proper and worthy means of our redemption; there is very little of mystery in the *object* of our faith and religion; but then, the evangelical *doctrine itself* would be an hyperbole, equally enigmatical and weak, and full of the most dangerous mysteries. Then would human reason not be enlightened and assisted by divine revelation, but involved in new and great darkness. Then would it be necessary to make dictionaries in the languages of all nations, into which the Holy Scriptures are translated, in order to give the plainest terms an unusual turn. How unhappy then should we all be! We might rationally suppose, indeed, that the in-

finite perfection and counsel of God were all-sufficient for our deliverance from the effects of the fall : but, relying on God's own information in that matter, receiving his testimonies according to their obvious sense, and attentively comparing them together, we are so far misled, as to hope for deliverance from Jesus, who had not obtained it, and who could not give it.

The gracious forgiveness of our sins, which dishonour God, is everywhere mentioned in Scripture as absolutely necessary to eternal salvation ; and that without this we can have no interest in the divine favour.^d With this are everywhere connected the authority of God and his laws ; the constant mention of his righteousness and holiness ; all those threatened punishments and judgments denounced and executed, in all ages, upon sinful men and nations ; all that humble supplication of the pious for grace ; and all that exaltation of divine mercy in the forgiveness of transgressions. The Bible is full of these : they are to be found not only in the writings of the prophets, but also in those of the evangelists and apostles. The faith of the gospel estab-

^d Ps. xxxii. 1, 2, &c.

lishes the law.^e For Jesús is revealed in it as a Saviour who not only instructs, but takes away sin ; who is “set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare God’s righteousness for the remission of sins.”^f That this is a principal part of the doctrine of redemption, we have before shewn. Now, deprive Christ of that high dignity, without which, the sufferings he underwent, and the curse he endured, are not sufficient to make satisfaction for all those who are desirous of salvation, deny also the justice of God, which insists on punishment, and, to maintain this scheme, add, that God, by his laws, exercises no authority demanding obedience, but goodness only, which aims at happiness ; and then we have no need of any thing else, in order to find the way of life, except it be to follow more closely his useful counsels. Thus we behold those very things either set aside, or totally erased, which are the principal subjects of the Bible ; and, on account of which, the intervention of the Saviour of the world is most highly celebrated !

None will deny that the mission of the Son of God into the world, is frequently celebrat-

^e Rom. iii. 31.

^f John i. 29. Rom. iii. 25.

ed as the greatest effect, and most convincing demonstration, of the love and mercy of God to sinners. "God so loved the world," says Jesus himself, "that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.^g In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, to be the propitiation for our sins.^h After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.ⁱ He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"^k But is this intelligible, does it not at least, lose its greatest emphasis, and most sublime meaning, if the opinion against which we militate be true? According to that hypothesis, the propitiation for our sins, is not by the substitution of one in the room of another; it is not an equivalent satisfaction, but only a forgiveness of sins, which God might have bestowed on us without Christ and his merits, as it is supposed by many he will do on all good heathens.

^g John iii. 16.

^h 1 John iv. 9, 10.

ⁱ Tit. iii. 4—7.

^k Rom. viii. 32.

When any one makes his own son submit to a severe task for our benefit, it must lay us under great obligations. The obligations, however, are much less, if that task was unnecessary; he being able to relieve us without such a sacrifice. The love of God also, is not such an astonishing exercise of goodness towards men, as towards Christ. For, according to that opinion, God did not send, or give to us, him who was his own Son; but, by a solemn mission, he has exalted a mere man to the dignity of the Son of God; and has given to him, who was like us in all things, except sin, a name above all creatures. Now, as we might have obtained everlasting life without Christ, his humiliation and comparatively short sufferings, were the way prescribed to him, by which to arrive at the highest glory and dominion.

We lament further, that the Socinian scheme is highly derogatory to the love of the Saviour toward unworthy men; which love is frequently celebrated in the same manner as that of the Father. The joyful language of the saints is, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us."¹

¹ 1 John iii. 16. John xv. 13.

“ Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.”^m In his love are a “ breadth and length, and depth and height ; and an excellence which passeth knowledge.”ⁿ “ Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever ! Amen.”^o Now though, when the divinity of Christ is not acknowledged, his inclination to obey his Father’s command, in order to save his fellows, is always commendable ; yet, it is clear as the meridian sun, that the everlasting praise ascribed to the inconceivable love of Jesus, is held forth to much more advantage by our doctrine, which maintains, That God the Son voluntarily united himself to human nature, and in it underwent punishment in the stead of sinners. This unlimited celebration of Christ’s love being so similar to the forementioned exaltation of the Father’s love, it cannot belong to a mere creature. Is Christ a mere creature ? then is he bound to love and duty by the command of God, and by the commission which he gave him ; but he has nothing of that unconstrained, voluntary, and

^m Eph. v. 25. Gal. ii. 20. Tit. ii. 14.

ⁿ Eph. iii. 18, 19. ^o Rev. i. 5, 6.

original love, which is supposed in that high praise. In his love we may acknowledge a commendable *fidelity*, but no *grace*; which, as it is often ascribed to Christ, is an exercise of supreme authority. Besides, the proofs and effects of his love would not excel those of the apostles and others, who submitted to a much longer and more difficult ministry, and to more lasting, and more varied persecutions and martyrdom for the advantage of the church, than is consistent with Jesus being esteemed so infinitely above them. For when it is said, that Jesus “washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God ;” it is not, according to that opinion, strictly true. For these are not effects of his bloody sufferings, but of his doctrine, confirmed by his blood. And then, how is the Prince of salvation degraded to a level with his apostles, and with so many heralds of the gospel who were faithful to the death ! Especially, if we add, that the duties enjoined upon him by God, were urged and enforced by a much greater reward than the Deity had ever bestowed on any of his ambassadors ; and that he knew his ministry was the way to his swaying the sceptre over all who should believe in, and follow him, to his reigning at

God's right hand over the living and the dead, friends and enemies ; to his receiving eternal thanks for a salvation which his abilities, or personal worth, could never have effected. How inconclusively would Paul have reasoned thus, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."^{p*} He might only have said, "Ye know the faithfulness of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that he was poor, that by his poverty he himself might become rich, and also help us to riches."

The gospel is a message of great joy, a doctrine of unsearchable and everlasting consolation, greatly superior to the less perfect revelation of God's compassion and friendship in ancient times : and all that holy joy must be in Christ Jesus.^q Now, all this is clear, great, exalted, and well founded, if Christ be the true God ; whereas, all is feeble and defective, if he have not the ability, if he have not the supreme good, from whence our chief happiness can arise. We cannot any longer boast, "He who spared not his own Son, will he not with

^p 2 Cor. viii. 9. * See App. Note Q.

^q Luke ii. 10, 11. Phil. ii. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.

^r 1 Pet. i. 8. Gal. v. 1.

him also freely give us all things?"^r For the force of those expressions consists in this, that he who gave the *greater* will not withhold the *less*. Let us try by which doctrine the most emphatical sense is to be found in the following expressions, which are so full of joy and comfort:—"We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins. There is therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." How great an honour, and what a salvation, to be Christ's people, his sheep, his members, his bride; if he be truly God! But, supposing the reverse, how distressing to Moses, how humiliating to Israel, was the threatening, that Jehovah, who had delivered and conducted the people so far, by the angel of his presence,^s should, as a punishment for their attachment to idolatry, give them up to an inferior angel,

^r Rom. viii. 32.^s Exod. xviii. 20, 21.

without his presence going with them!^t But would not christians now come into such a situation? To that ancient church it was said, "Thy Maker is thy husband."^{*} Would it not then be a great loss, a dreadful humiliation, if we were now the property, if the whole christian church were the bride, of a teacher highly qualified indeed, but yet a mere creature? After the accomplishment of the promises, are all the people of God in this family of freedom, and under so glorious a ministry now, more than Jacob's posterity formerly, subjected to a merely human guardian and protector, or to some middle being?"^u

The christian doctrine is not less excellent with respect to moral duties. We are daily told, that established doctrines, ravishing contemplations, and profound mysteries, are not so essential to religion as a holy and thankful life, an endeavour after our true happiness, integrity and humility in our conversation, the exercise of benevolence, and the like. These duties stand also very high in our estimation. We ac-

^t Exod. xxxiii. 1—15.

^{*} Isa. liv. 5. This consolation belongs strictly to the new family of the church; and it is spoken in the plural number, your *Makers*.

^u See Gal. iv. 1—7. v. 1. Heb. ii. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 7—11.

knowledge that sanctification is a principal part of the deliverance from our apostacy, and that it is the intention of reconciliation through Christ; who, far from being "*the minister of sin*,"^v gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."^w But how greatly would this intention be injured, how much would the advancement of moral good be defeated, were we to exclude from the gospel those motives which are most powerful and affecting, and best adapted to enforce the exercise of important duties! The doctrines being denied, from which the gospel positively, and more forcibly than any other system of morals, derives all sincere endeavours to be virtuous, those motives must entirely fail. John's epistles are particularly celebrated, because they so strongly recommend love, and pure morals. But then, is it not evident, that he always connects those duties, as he does the whole of our salvation, with the forgiveness of sins, through the reconciliation effected by the Son of God? Let our high esteem of the Saviour be tried by this touchstone. According as his true di-

^v Gal. ii. 17.^w Tit. ii. 14. 1 Cor. i. 30.

vinity, and the expiatory virtue of his sufferings, are acknowledged or denied, will be the strength and emphasis, or the feebleness and coldness, of the many and various exhortations, urged in Scripture, respecting the grace of God, in the cross of his Son! For example, in exhortations to a pious life, "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; for as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, but with the precious blood of Christ.^x Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness."^y—To love God; "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love him, because he first loved us."^z—To glorify God; "Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's."^a—To gratitude to Christ; "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live

^x 1 Pet. i. 17—19.

^y 1 Pet. ii. 24.

^z 1 John iv. 10, 19.

^a 1 Cor. vi. 20.

should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.”^b—To avoid irregularities ; “ Many walk of whom I have told you often, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ.”^c—To the love of our neighbours ; “ Walk in love ; as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.”^d—To liberality ; “ Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for our sakes he became poor,”^e—To humility ; “ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus ; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and took upon him the form of a servant,” &c.^f—To faithfulness in the gospel ministry ; “ Take heed to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”^g—To subjection to human regulations ; “ Fear God ; honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward ; for if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patient-

^b 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

^c Phil. iii. 18.

^d Eph. v. 2. 1 John iii. 16.

^e 2 Cor. viii. 9.

^f Phil. ii. 5, 8.

^g Acts xx. 28.

ly, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto ye were called, because Christ also suffered for us :"^h and so on.

We have mentioned several doctrines, which the gospel usually shows to be of great importance ; but which, without the acknowledgement of Christ's divinity, lose their force. There are also particular Scripture phrases, which would have no meaning without the supposition of this truth. For the sake of brevity, we shall produce only the following instances. The apostle John gives a mark of the true gospel doctrine, in order to distinguish "the spirits which are of God," from "many false prophets; the spirit of truth from the spirit of error; the Spirit of God from the spirit of antichrist." What is that mark? We have an interest in being acquainted with it; and it is connected with our subject: "Every spirit," says he, "that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God."ⁱ Thus we are plainly instructed, not respecting any doctrine of philosophy cleared up by Jesus; but with regard to a just apprehension concerning the person and life of Christ. Now, did this consist in the ac-

^h 1 Pet. ii. 17—25.

ⁱ 1 John iv. 1—3.

knowledge that he was a *man*, and born as a man? Without doubt this is implied in what is here said; this is a necessary link in the golden chain of salvation; and is to be found every where in the gospel. But for this purpose, "the witness of God," and the "faith which overcometh the world," (mentioned by John in this and the following chapters) were not necessary. All the Jews, and Pilate with his attendants, believed that. If the apostle meant here to oppose the absurd and newly commenced error of the Docetae, (who, from a mistaken respect for the Redeemer, or rather, from a mistaken notion about the impurity of the heavenly bodies, maintained that he was born and died only in *appearance*;) this was certainly not the only, nor the principal object at which he aimed. If we consider the scope of the whole epistle, the sense and force of that doctrine by which the spirits are to be tried, consist in this, First, that Jesus was truly *the Christ*, the promised Messiah, to whom the prophets looked, and whom the fathers expected. This the apostle asserts, chap. ii. 22. "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" Secondly, that this Anointed of the Lord, this Hope of believers under the Old

Testament, existed long before ; but had now actually taken upon him our nature, and had come to live among men, in order to make our peace with God. We shall not presumptuously impose our opinion on the apostle ; but form it according to what he himself repeatedly says, “ In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him—sent him to be the propitiation for our sins—sent him to be the Saviour of the world.”^k It is not said that God caused Jesus to be born, that he might be our teacher, and also the Son of God in virtue of his wonderful birth and ministry ; but, that he who was the Son of God is *sent*, not only to instruct but to save ; particularly, to be “ *the propitiation for our sins.*” The apostle also makes our *victory*, our *abiding in God*, to depend on confessing, not only that Jesus is a son of man ; but especially, that the same man Jesus is “ the Son of God ;” and that he is “ the Jesus Christ that is come.”^l That this is the sense of John’s doctrine, (which tries the spirits) appears also from a comparison of other parts of his writings. “ The Life was

^k 1 John iv. 9, 10, 14.

^l 1 John iv. 15. v. 5, 6.

manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us.^m In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was made flesh; and out of his fulness have we received grace for grace.”ⁿ The meaning of those expressions in our text, “*to come in the flesh*,” is by the same author elsewhere thus expressed, “Coming from above;° coming down from heaven where he was before;^p coming from the Father, and coming into the world.”^q The design of John’s writing confirms our interpretation. For in this Epistle, and also in his Gospel, he particularly opposes those who, even in his time, had too low thoughts of Christ, and who “made God a liar, because they did not believe that God had given to us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son.”^r

^m 1 John i. 2. ⁿ John i. 1—18. ° John iii. 31.

^p John iii. 13. vi. 38, 51, 62. ^q John xvi. 28.

xiii. 3. ^r 1 John v. 10—13.

SECTION XVI.

THE COMING OF CHRIST TO JUDGMENT.

WE proceed with reverence to the contemplation of that future and most splendid display of the glory of Christ, in which we have so solemn a concern. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ."^s That Christ shall one day judge all mankind, whether living or dead, is a matter of such importance in the doctrine of salvation, that no sooner did the apostles propose the gospel to the heathens,* than they made mention of it, and of its certainty. See instances of this, Acts x. 42. xxiv. 24, 25. xvii. 31.† This awful truth inspires seriousness; and at the same time strongly proves the true divinity of Jesus.

In favour of this we are much prepossessed, by the representation which is given of the mighty preparation, of the magnificent attendance, and of the majesty, overawing all nature, with which the Son of Man shall come to judgment, and which, on this account, is

^s Rom. xiv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 10.

* See App. Note R.

† See App. Note S.

called "his glorious appearance:"^t an appearance of which he himself, and his apostles, give so many bold and significant representations,^{tt} either proper or emblematical. It also deserves particular notice, that this appearance will infinitely transcend the lustre of divine appearances to the patriarchs, in Solomon's consecrated temple, or even at the giving of the law, and the institution of the Theocracy on mount Sinai.

But the divinity of Christ appears more evidently from the authority with which he, as universal judge, is invested. That God the Father hath committed to him all judgment, and that he will judge the world "by his Son,"^u must not be considered by us as if Christ were not possessed of supreme majesty. Earthly magistrates appoint subordinate judges and tribunals, because they are not of themselves competent to examine and judge every thing relating to the safety and happiness of their people. But will not the Deity administer justice himself? Will the Law-giver, under whose jurisdiction we live, put

^t Tit. ii. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 13.

^{tt} Matt. xxv. 31—34.

1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. 2 Thess. i. 7—10. Jude 14. 2 Pet. iii. 7—13. Matt. xxiv. 29—31. may also be compared.

^u Rom. ii. 16. Acts xvii. 31.

the determination of the future state of his reasonable creatures, the *everlasting punishment and eternal life*^v of all mankind, into the hands of a mere creature; and that also, without an appeal to God's own judgment? God cannot give that high honour to any stranger. If we would know why God, who has no need of any other judge, "has committed all judgment to the Son;" Jesus himself shows us the intention was, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."^w

Let us further attend to what God says on this subject: "The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom;"^x which implies, that he is at once both judge and king; as we have already seen. "Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."^y He shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity."^z The King shall act in his own affairs—the affairs of his honour and authority; according as men shall have conducted themselves towards him: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathe-

^v Matt. xxv. 34, 41, 46. ^w John v. 22, 23. ^x 2 Tim. iv. 1. ^y Matt. xxv. 31. ^z Matt. xiii. 40—42.

ma, maranatha.”^a See this explained more clearly, and at greater length, though in figurative language, by our Saviour himself.^b With which his particular but supreme decisions in time, may also be compared.^c

The Lord Jesus is celebrated as “*the righteous judge*.”^d This quality is the more necessary in a judge, in proportion to the extent of his jurisdiction, and to the stability of his decisions. Abraham’s just observation is applicable here: “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”^e But is the righteousness of the most exalted creature (who at best is fallible) so perfect and steady, that he should be entrusted with the execution of God’s justice, the general, the last, the irreversible judgment?

It ought also to be observed, that mercy and wrath are attributed to that great Judge. He who acts as a subordinate judge, without an underived and original authority, has no power to forbear exacting the most rigorous justice, or to show compassion. But Paul prays that the Lord would grant unto Onesiphorus, “that he may find mercy of the Lord

^a 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

^b Matt. xxv. 34—45. Luke

xix. 12—27.

^c Matt. iii. 12. Rev. ii. 23. iii. 8, 10.

^d 2 Tim. iv. 8. 1 John ii. 28, 29.

^e Gen. xviii. 25.

in that day.”^f It is well known, that *jealousy*, *wrath*, *consuming fire*, and the like, are ascribed to God in the highest degree, and with all the force of eastern imagery ; though his perfection is capable of no proper affections or passions. But he is thus represented, in condescension to the weakness of sinful man, that we might be impressed with a sense of his natural and unchangeable abhorrence of moral evil ; an abhorrence attended with such dreadful consequences, that we might be convinced of the certainty of the punishment of sin. We know what endeavours are used to render the justice of God, which demands satisfaction for sin, doubtful. But how, then, can a merely created judge, (whose highest authority could not be original, against whom sin was not committed, and who, while he was under obligation to love his neighbours, would have no inclination or ability to condemn and punish men, but what proceeded from his subjection to a higher authority,) how, I say, can a merely created judge be represented as one “whose eyes are like a flame of fire ;”^g and “as taking vengeance in flaming fire ?”^h The great and the small of the earth, at that solemn period,

^f 2 Tim. i. 18.^g Rev. ii. 18.^h 2 Thess. i. 8.

are described, as “saying to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?”ⁱ He is able therefore, “to save and to destroy;” but that is the prerogative of the *one Lawgiver*.^k

Should any imagine, however, that we do not reason justly, or that we conclude too much from figurative expressions, let it be so considered. The Lord’s true divinity appears, notwithstanding, from the infinite ability required to execute the general judgment. Our Judge is *omniscient*; and this removes all objections. We are assured that he shall judge all nations, all individuals, the living and the dead;^l and therefore all who lived before his incarnation. (That the angels are also here concerned we have already seen.) This judgment extends to every thing in the present life, that is *done in the body, whether it be good or bad*.^m To *words*,ⁿ and to whatever is done in *secret*.^o That is, not only to bodily actions

ⁱ Rev. vi. 16, 17.

^k James iv. 12.

^l Matt. xxv. 32. Acts xvii. 31. x. 42. 2 Cor. v. 10.

^m 2 Cor. v. 10.

ⁿ Matt. xii. 36. Jude 15.

^o Eccl. xii. 14. Rom. ii. 16. 1 Cor. iv. 5.

performed in solitude and darkness ; but also to the motions of the mind ; to the principles and dispositions ; to the desires, affections, and passions ; as also to concealed designs, which are the true, though disguised motives of human conduct. It extends, doubtless, to whatever ought to be intended, thought on, or done. May we not add, to all that the dead shall have done, or neglected, after death, when separated from the body ? Besides all this, must not the Judge review, and be perfectly well acquainted with all the manifold relations and connections, whether natural, accidental, or voluntary ; whether permanent or changeable ; in which every man shall have been placed, and by which our duties are fixed and prescribed ? Must not the final Judge have a complete view of all the instructions and seductions ; of all the manifold internal or external supports and temptations ; together with all the consequences which might at any time arise from what was neglected or done, so far as they might and ought to have been foreseen ; and in a word, of all circumstances which increase or lessen moral good or evil ? No man doubts, who knows any thing of this matter, that upon all these particulars, moral goodness, or

depravity, depends: as also the degree and moral importance of all voluntary actions, and of their whole connection: and consequently the passing of a right judgment on whatever is blame-worthy in every one's life. Hence it is, that whether we punish the faults of our neighbours, or whether we balance accounts with our own consciences, we find it difficult to make a just estimate of even a few actions. But that supreme and decisive judgment, to which human justice must often leave secret abominations; to which so many good men must leave their oppressions, varnished over with an appearance of justice, never can fail, or be mistaken. That general judgment, which is to solve so many enigmas in the ways of providence, cannot be superficial, perplexed, or uncertain. That divine wisdom which, in the government of nature, directs every thing, from the heavenly luminaries to the smallest insect, in just proportion, cannot leave the august disposals of the rational and moral world destitute of the strictest equity. The Judge, then, before whom mankind are to appear, is *omniscient*.

The last judgment will also bear the evidences of his *omnipotence*. In the forecited passages, which mention this doctrine, the ir-

resistible execution of his final sentence is also ascribed to him. The Alpha and Omega “shall give unto every man according as his work shall be.”^p The angels, whose ministry shall be employed, are “mighty angels.”^q If any one still doubts, let him seriously consider the preparatory work ; which is far superior to all other miraculous operations, and to which the abilities of all the angels united are not equal. The work, I mean, is *the raising of all the dead* ; which the great Prince of Life so frequently ascribes to himself.^r



SECTION XVII.

THE ADORATION OF CHRIST IS NOT IDOLATRY.

Idolatry is a sin of the first magnitude, because, in the practice of it, religion and all the duties connected with it, entirely miss their object ; are alienated from God, whose

Rev. xxii. 12, 13. compare chap. ii. 23. Matt. xvi. 27.

^q 2 Thess. i. 7.

^r John v. 21—29. vi. 39, 40.

xi. 23—25. See also Phil. iii. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 24—26, 45.

worship cannot be divided with any other ; and are transferred to unqualified beings. The first command of the moral law of Moses was against idolatry : and by the political law of Israel, that crime was punished with death. Divine revelation served to correct this inclination to error in human reason. It is often mentioned as Israel's greatest privilege, that they were in that respect distinguished above the heathens. The heaviest complaints which God so often made against that people ; his severest threatenings and most awful punishments, were directed against their ungrateful and rebellious revolt to idols. The new family of God's church, therefore, could not but have a strong view of the sinfulness of idolatry, in proportion to their clearer light. The promised, and remarkable calling of the Gentile nations, chiefly aimed at the destruction of idol worship ; and the apostles began their ministry among them with this particular.^s Agreeably to all which, the word of inspiration cannot allow the least religious honour to be given to any besides the true God : much less can it exhibit a constant encouragement to such a practice.

^s See Acts xiv. xvii.

But, how many things, supernatural and divine, are ascribed to Christ! What properties, works, titles, and honours! He is the constant object and matter of the preaching of salvation. Our everlasting happiness is derived from him. Hence, the most eminent examples of confidence in him, and of subjection to him. But these particulars have been already considered. If, then, the Saviour were not the true God, such an effectual encouragement to idolatry never could have been given, by any religious system of pagan contrivance. Then would the gospel lay a foundation for the most abominable superstition, by which, for the space of eighteen centuries, far the greatest part of the professors of Christianity, and among them the wisest and best informed, (as also those who, to their immortal honour, have, by their skill in languages, and other branches of learning, examined and explained the Scriptures) have paid religious honour to a crucified person, who had not the abilities of a Saviour—who was not truly God.

We are confident that our opponents will not publish the dreadful consequences of idol worship. The boldest among them may, at present, look with contempt on the serious professors of our Lord's divinity; and consi-

der them as men of weak and unenlightened understandings: but God forbid that they should gain ground, and proceed to further injuries! Nevertheless, their doctrine of toleration, and their boasted light, open heaven to people of every opinion. For, according to their principles, no precisely just sentiment concerning the Saviour's person and work, is deemed necessary to our salvation, provided we live virtuously, and in charity with men. But with this we are not satisfied. Being persuaded that we find, in the divine fulness of Jesus, and in his grace, which lays us under so many obligations, the greatest incitements and aids to exercise the social virtues, and to perform every good work; we cannot but conclude, that it is not sufficient for us to do good to men, while we fail in the duties which are owing to God, and turn aside to idolatry. We entreat all who bear the name of Christ, not to be indifferent about this important affair; but, with us, to be careful that, respecting the Lord Jesus, they neither give religious honour to a mere creature, nor deny the Supreme Majesty, and our most high God. It is not a subtlety in school divinity, with which we are here concerned. It is the very first and chief principle of religion. Consequent-

ly, it must be rational and consistent with fact. To deny, with Arius or Socinus, that the Saviour is the true God, and yet to worship him, is an absurdity too gross for reasonable men.

The wisdom of God, his compassionate kindness, and his holiness, do not permit the reading, the hearing, the examining, and comparing of his word, to be so dangerous ; or the honouring of our Redeemer to be attended with so much difficulty. He who smote Herod, for allowing the people to say of him, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man ;"^t could not suffer so many divine things to be ascribed to Jesus, either by himself, or by the apostles under the direction of his Spirit, if he were not co-existent with the Father. No, we humbly hope, that the divine Father will not be angry that we reverence, obey, and confide in his beloved Son, in whom, he has repeatedly said, "he is well pleased."^u And it must be allowed, that in so treating him, we do not obscure, but magnify the greatness of God ; since he hath connected his own honour with that of his Son.^v He who said,

^t Acts xii. 22, 23.

^u Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5.

^v John v. 23. xi. 4.

“Thou shalt worship no other God ; for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God ;”^w hath appointed, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”^x Surely the heavenly Judge, who, in his deepest humiliation, and before he triumphantly entered into his kingdom, heard and answered the cry of the penitent, will not condemn us at the great day, because we have sought and expected “his mercy unto eternal life.”^y But then certainly, neither God the Father, nor the Lord Jesus Christ, considers this our adoration as idolatry : and consequently this worship belongs to Christ.

Yes, (and this is what we particularly intended in the title of this Section) the word of God expressly contrasts the Saviour, as well as his Father, with idols ; and his service with idolatry : by which his divinity is yet further confirmed. Does it not appear to my reader, as it does to myself, extremely remarkable, that, in the same passage and con-

^w Exod. xxxiv. 14.

^x Phil. ii. 10, 11.

^y Jude 21. Heb. ix. 28.

nection, in which Jehovah commands Israel "not to provoke his Angel, but to obey him in all things, his name being in him ; because otherwise he would not pardon their iniquities ;" he should at the same time thunder against idolatry, in which the nations lay immersed, and for which they were cut off?^z The Israelites, when taken from among the heathens, were to be purified from their abominable idols, and then to have David, the "servant of the Lord, for their only king and shepherd for ever." Ezek. xxvii. 21—28. This is intelligible only as it is applied to the Messiah. So likewise Hosea iii. Again, consider the contrast in 1 Cor. viii. 4—6. "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many) ; but to us there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ." The conversion of the heathens consisted, not in their being brought over from the service of the sun and moon to the service of any other creature ; but to the service of the true God. But, then, it should be observed, that

^z Exod. xxiii. 20—25.

this conversion of theirs from idols, was a conversion to Christ. When the Galatians “knew not God, they did service unto them which by nature are no gods;” but being converted, “they were Christ’s.”^a Those of Thessalonica, “turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.”^b The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in abominable idolatries—who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.”^c Believers in Christ, therefore, must, for his sake, renounce all connection with idol service. “What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God.”^d Neither be idolaters as were some of them.^e Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted him. This ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”^f

^a Gal. iv. 8. comp. iii. 29.

^b 1 Thes. i. 9, 10.

^c 1 Pet. iv. 3, 5.

^d 2 Cor. vi. 15, 16. comp. Heb.

iii. 6.

^e 1 Cor. x. 7, 9.

^f Eph. v. 5.

In the church of Christ, a new and shocking kind of idolatry was to arise. By a spirit of error, "the man of sin, the son of perdition, was to oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, was to sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Whose coming was to be in all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them who received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."^g But, in opposition to this delusion and apostacy, Paul thankfully sets the privileges of the Thessalonians, as "being called by the gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," to whom, equally as to God the Father, the apostle prayed that they might be comforted and established.^h That man of sin, then, "who exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped," and was the enemy of God; set himself also against the "glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," as an enemy of Christ—an antichrist, as John speaks. For which reason Christ was to "consume and destroy him with the brightness of his coming."ⁱ This

^g 1 Thes. ii. 3—12.

^h 1 Thes. ii. 13, 14, 16, 17.

ⁱ Verse 8.

opposition to Christ implies, not only that he should apostatize from the doctrine of Christ; but that he should set himself against the honour and rights of Christ, and assume to himself in the church, what belonged to Christ. "He would sit in the temple of God, as if he were the true God," while it is the prerogative of Christ to establish himself there, as in his temple, to show his glory, and to be served.^k This emphatical representation of Christ, filling his throne in the church, with majesty and authority, was long before intended by that sublime vision, in which the Lord of hosts appeared to Isaiah, "sitting upon a high throne, and his train filling the temple." While the seraphim, with profound reverence addressing him, thrice exclaimed, Holy!^l See the apostle's comment, in which this is applied to Christ.^m

^k Mal. iii. 1. Heb. iii. 6.

^l Isa. vi.

^m John xii. 39—41.

SECTION XVIII.

THE REJECTION OF CHRIST INEXPIABLE.

OUR most respectful homage to the Lord Jesus, with subjection and confidence, is not idolatry; but a prescribed duty, and an acceptable service to God. Let us now see what is the consequence of refusing this. The same gospel that reveals Christ, as the sure foundation of our salvation, describes him also as a *stone of stumbling*, and as a stone which breaks its opposers in pieces.ⁿ For, as faith in him is the appointed mean of salvation; so is the want of that faith a real disobedience, and the certain way to damnation. “He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”^o Now this not only concerned his enemies among the Jews when he was upon earth; but it continued, after his departure, to be the doctrine of the apostles among all nations. “Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire; taking ven-

ⁿ Matt. xxi. 42—44.^o John iii. 16—18, 36.

geance on them that obey not the gospel; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction.^p Grace, or a curse, is annexed to loving, or not loving, (not Peter or John, but) the Lord Jesus Christ."^q

Such awful sentences not only enjoin upon us all seriousness and circumspection; but teach us again to consider Christ as exalted, beyond comparison, above all the other ambassadors of God. So far as Moses, the prophets, or the apostles, spoke by God's command, want of faith in what they said was punishable, as being disobedience to God who sent them. But, in regard to Christ, the threatening arises from the excellence of the teacher himself, or the supereminent dignity of his person. "He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the Son of God.^r He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy. Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?"^s The exaltation of Christ, therefore, is not barely a pre-eminence among other teachers upon earth, as many in these times would have it; but founded in his superior nature and heavenly origin, as the Son of God. Remarkable is

^p 2 Thes. i. 7—9.

^q Eph. vi. 24. 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

^r John iii. 18.

^s Heb. x. 28, 29.

that saying, "If they escaped not, who refused him that spoke on earth; much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."^t No angels, created principalities, or middle beings, must here be thought of, or set on a footing with Christ. He is the supreme Lord of all God's ambassadors; and therefore, unbelief is, to so high a degree punishable. For, after the apostle had shown that the majesty of Christ is incomparably above the dignity of prophets and of angels, he adds, "If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord?"^u

Severe threatenings thus denounced against despising the Saviour, but no where against honouring him too much, may justly lead us to that rational conclusion which, in doubtful affairs, is usually drawn from the safer side: which conclusion is entirely in favour of our opinion. But after all, should any incline to the contrary side of the question, then must the defenders of it establish their opposition to Christ's eternal divinity on such grounds as leave no room for fear of any proofs or

^t Heb. xii. 25. comp. John iii. 31. Luke xx. 13.

^u Heb. ii. 2—5.

elucidations overturning their sentiment. We seek not, however, merely the safer side of the question here in dispute; for we are disposed to acknowledge fully the truth of that Supreme Majesty which is common to the Father and the Son, and to build our conviction on good grounds.

Let us compare those awful threatenings with that loving-kindness of God which is never enough to be praised. Upon this, indeed, those who differ from us often reason: and we also find in it our great interest and consolation. How is it, then, to be understood, that God proposes the sending of Jesus Christ, as the most distinguished proof of his love to men; to deliver them from death and destruction; if, nevertheless, this way of deliverance be not necessary; and at the same time, puts them into a situation to commit a new sin, which, above all others, is inexpressible, and shuts the door of salvation? If sinners might be saved without satisfaction made by a mediator; how are we (since the divine goodness and justice never threaten and execute punishment, when it is unnecessary for the honour and interests of God's kingdom); I say, how is it that we are bound under the severest denunciation of divine displeasure,

and of certain destruction, to consider an arbitrarily qualified man, as the object of our humblest submission, and of our confidence? especially as his circumstances among men, which were peculiarly humiliating, (and, according to the principles opposed, cannot be accounted for from the design of the deliverance) rendered him suspected and despised by his cotemporaries, and were a stumbling-block to both Jews and Gentiles?—On the contrary, if Jesus “was made sin for us,” and underwent for his people the punishment which was necessary to their reconciliation; if, to this end, a mere creature was absolutely insufficient; if a divine deliverer actually assumed our nature, and, by his sufferings, opened the way to salvation; then, not only every stumbling-block is removed out of the way of those who know the greatness of their guilt, and their desert of punishment before God; but then also is God’s love to sinners the object of their most grateful adoration. Then is all sin expiable, except the rejection of that great and only mean of salvation. Then may we understand, “of how much sorer punishment he shall be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant an un-

holy thing :” and why Christ will “not confess before his Father, those who shall not have confessed him before men.”^v Then is the dreadful sentence not unjust, however lightly some teachers and professors may treat it, That *whosoever*, in opposition to the gospel, brings any other message of deliverance to miserable sinners, whether from philosophy or from revelation, “though he were an angel from heaven, is accursed.”^w Then it is also highly necessary for us, whatever wind of error or of opposition may blow, to endure to the end in the faith of our Redeemer, who is full of salvation, and rich in love, that we may be saved.^x

SECTION XIX.

THE RELATION OF CHRIST TO GOD THE FATHER.

THE comparison of our Lord Jesus Christ with men and angels, as already considered, tends to assure us, that no finite being is equal to him. Let us now view him in relation to God his Father, as well with regard to his

^v Heb. x. 29. Matt. x. 33. ^w Gal. i. 8, 9. Acts iv. 12. ^x Matt. xxiv. 9—13. 2 Tim. ii. 12, 13.

co-existence as to his subjection : but in this high mystery, we would not be *wise above what is written*.

We have already shown, in several views, that in the word of God, (from which only we can learn the true character of Christ ; the belief of which testimony concerning him, is also strictly commanded) such sublime things as belong to none but the Supreme Being ; such to which God appeals, as the distinguishing marks of his greatness ; are also ascribed to Jesus Christ. If, then, we would give credit to the divine information, we dare not esteem him less than equal to God, *ὁμοούσιος*.

Now, all this is to be found, not only in such passages of Scripture where Christ is spoken of alone, or is contrasted with men ; but also in those where he is mentioned with God the Father, and is compared with him. It is indeed certain, that neither every kind of *connection* with God, nor every degree of *likeness* to God, nor yet in every sense being *one* with God, proves an equality and co-existence.^y But we have our eye on those testimonies, by which God the Father appears in his divine works, administration, and supreme authority ; and when these are attri-

^y See John xvii. 11, 21. 1 John i. 3. Acts xv. 28.

Rev. iii. 21.

buted to Christ in common with him. We have often been surprised at the unrestrained boldness, clearness, and variety, with which the infallible penmen speak on this point.

For example, with regard to saving and directing operations: "God himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.^a Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, comfort your hearts, and establish you.^a The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.^b Called of Jesus Christ, and beloved of God.^c Be strong in the Lord—put on the whole armour of God.^d If a man love me, my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him, and make *our* abode with him."^e The spiritual felicity of believers consists in "continuing," not in John, or in Paul, but "in the Son, and in the Father."^f Grace is implored for the churches, as the source of all spiritual and everlasting blessings. But *whose* grace? Sometimes it is called the grace of Jesus Christ

^a 1 Thes. iii. 11.

^a 2 Thes. ii. 16, 17.

^b 2 Thes. iii. 5.

^c Rom. i. 6, 7.

^d Eph. vi. 10, 11.

^e John xiv. 23.

^f 1 John ii. 22—24.

alone,^g but frequently the grace “of God the Father, and of the Lord Jesus Christ.”^h Thus also, “Grace and peace be unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.”ⁱ In like manner to Timothy, and to Titus, “Grace, mercy, and peace, be to you, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.”ⁱⁱ

The Saviour, together with his Father, is represented as possessed of high authority and majesty. “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.”^k Not without law to God, but under a law to Christ.”^l Servants are commanded to be obedient, “not as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God.”^m Call no man your father upon earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master even Christ.”ⁿ An idolater hath no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God.^o Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him

^g Gal. vi. 18. Rom. xvi. 24. 1 Cor. xvi. 23, &c.

^h Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. Eph. i. 2.
vi. 23. &c. ⁱ 2 Pet. i. ii. ⁱⁱ 1 Tim. i. 2. 2 Tim.

i. 2. Tit. 1. 4. ^k John xi. 4. ^l 1 Cor. ix. 21.

^m Eph. vi. 5, 6. ⁿ Matt. xxiii. 9, 10. ^o Eph. v. 5.

that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.^p Now are come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.^q On such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ!^r Priests of Christ.—A *priest* is a servant of Deity; either of the true God, or of some fictitious god; but the latter cannot be considered as here concerned. The conclusion therefore is obvious. We have already seen that the name LORD, in sacred Scripture, is given, by way of excellence, sometimes to the Father, and sometimes to Christ. It ought also to be remarked, that, in the places just mentioned, Christ is so often characterised by that name, in connection not only with inferior beings, but with God; before whom, and in comparison with whom, all created glory and dominion vanish; and that even in places where the divine authority over men, and the subjection of men, are expressly mentioned. For instance, “James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ.”^s The church in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ.^t I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus

^p Rev. v. 13. ^q Rev. xii. 10. xi. 15. ^r Rev. xx. 6.

^s James i. 1. ^t 1 Thes. i. 1. 2 Thes. i. 1.

Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.”^u What can be more emphatical than the name *Soter*, or *Saviour* (in those places where God the Father and Christ are jointly mentioned) that is given sometimes to the one, and sometimes to the other? To the Father: “Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ.”^v To the Son: “Them that have obtained like precious faith, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”^{w*} It is remarkable that, as it were in one breath, they are denominated “God our Saviour,” and “Jesus Christ our Saviour,” Tit. i. 3, 4. ; ii. 10—13. ; iii. 4—6.

Respecting the exalted relation of the Saviour to his Father, that sublime name, *the Son of God*, deserves particular notice. We are not ignorant, that in the sacred writings reasonable creatures are often honoured with the title of, *the sons*, or *children* of God ; and that in several respects, and for reasons which

^u 2 Tim. iv. 1

^v 1 Tim. i. 1.

^w 2 Pet. i. 1.

* Our opponents will not apply to Christ the name God, in both these places, nor yet in James i. 1. This indeed might be done, without any injury to the original ; but from it we would not here argue.

are known. But certainly that name, as applied to Christ, implies something higher.^x For he is not only A Son of God, but THE SON, by way of excellence, and above all, *ὁ υἱός*. So that he is thereby, as by a proper and peculiarly adapted *subjective* name, distinguished from all other subjects. “We know that the Son of God is come.^y He is God’s only begotten Son;^z God’s own Son.^a To which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?”^b When Christ spake to the disciples respecting his Father, he never said *our* Father, as he had taught them to pray; but always with an express distinction, *my* Father.^c

That name, the Son of God, was known among the Israelites, from the prophetic doctrine, as emphatically applicable to the Messiah; as evidently appears from different passages.^d Amidst all the confusion of their opinions, they found in this so much energy, that the acknowledgment of it was with them

^x John x. 35—38. ^y 1 John v. 20. John viii. 36.

^z John i. 14, 18. iii. 16. ^a Rom. viii. 32.

^b Heb. i. 5. ^c Luke ii. 48, 49. John ii. 16.

see especially John xx. 17. ^d Matt. xvi. 15, 16.

xxvi. 63. Mark iii. 11. John vi. 69. xi. 27. John x. 36.

a true ground of adoration:^e so that when Jesus, ascribing to himself divine works, called God his Father, they concluded from thence, what the Saviour did not contradict, that he considered God as his Father in the most emphatical sense, and thus made himself equal to God.^f In fact, how intimate soever the connection is between Jesus being the Christ, and being the Son of God, the latter must signify something more; something original, for Paul preached Christ, that he is the Son of God.^g

Let us attend, with a sincere love of truth, to the divine testimony. He did not become the Son of God, by, or after his coming in the flesh; by, or after, the execution of his ministry; for herein is God's great mercy celebrated, that God sent him who was his Son, in the form of a servant—that he gave his own Son. This is evident from a number of

^e Matt. xiv. 33. John ix. 35—38. / ^f John. v. 18. x. 33—36. ^g Acts ix. 20. See also Acts viii. 37.

In both places, however, there is a different reading in the Greek. But compare the first accusation of Jesus before Pilate, that he said he was the Christ, Luke xxiii. 2. with a later one, that he made himself the Son of God, John xix. 7.

texts.^g It appears with a beautiful simplicity in one of our Lord's parables. The Lord of the vineyard, "sent to the husbandmen many servants; and they beat some, and killed others. Having yet therefore one Son, his well-beloved Son, he sent him also last unto them, saying, they will reverence my Son."^h That the reason of so awful a punishment being annexed to unbelief, lies in the high excellency of Christ as the Son of God, we have already seen. As the "Son of God, he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person."ⁱ In the same chapter he is represented, agreeably to the manner of speaking among men, as being of himself the heir: that is, he has a natural right to all God's works, particularly to his church; which also are made by him in common with the Father. See this described, in a very lofty strain, by the apostle,^k and also by himself.^l This title, *the Son of God*, as ascribed to him, shews not only his distinguished exaltation above all creatures, which

^g Gal. iv. 4. Rom. viii. 32. Heb. v. 8. 1 John iv. 9, 10. ^h Mark xii. 6. ⁱ Heb. i. 3.

^k Heb. i. 1—3. iii. 3—6. Col. i. 15—17.

^l Mark xii. 6, 7.

Arius himself acknowledged ; but also an equality of nature with the Father, and a ground of his existence in the eternal and necessary existence of his Father.

Let us now consider the Lord Jesus Christ, respecting his undeniable subjection to the Father. "The Father," says he, "is greater than I."^m As "Christ is the head of the church, so is God the head of Christ."ⁿ He calls the Father his God.^o The Father "raised him up to Israel ;^p anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power ;^q spared him not, but delivered him up for us all ;^r and raised him from the dead."^s God *gave* him for the execution of his saving designs, and "sent him into the world to do his will."^t "The work which was given him, he finished ; and in that work he was faithful to his Father."^u Therefore God also "highly exalted him ;^v set him at his right hand in heaven ;^w and gave him all power.^x He made

^m John xiv. 28.

ⁿ 1 Cor. iii. 21. xi. 3.

^o Matt. xxvii. 46. John xx. 17. ^p Acts xiii. 23.

^q Acts x. 38.

^r Rom. viii. 32.

^s Acts ii. 24.

^t John iii. 16, 17. vi. 38—40.

^u John iv. 34. xvii. 4. Heb. iii. 2. x. 9.

^v Phil. ii. 9.

^w Eph. i. 20.

^x Matt. xxviii. 18.

him both Lord and Christ;^y exalted him to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins."^z He hath also "appointed him to judge the world in righteousness;^a and, when that period arrives, Christ shall be subject to the Father, and the kingdom delivered up to him."^b

To be the true God, and to be inferior to God; to be infinite, and to be subject; are, according to reason and scripture, inconsistent properties. These, however, are ascribed by undeniable authority to the same subject. There must, therefore, be some method of clearing up this difficulty. How often do we meet with things in the kingdom of truth, which appear totally irreconcilable; but, when accurately examined, agree and support one another? Of this our own existence is a striking example. But the great matter is, to examine upon what ground every thing is established, and how apparent contradictions are to be understood. Now, whereas those who oppose the Divinity of Jesus, never could, as far as we have seen, answer the manifold proofs in favour of it; the abettors of that doctrine, on the contrary, have a large field for giving

^y Acts ii. 36.

^z Acts v. 31.

^a Acts xvii. 31.

^b 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

a satisfactory explication, as often as any thing that is not divine, any thing below the nature and authority of his Father, any thing finite, is asserted of him. “He who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon him the form of a servant.”^c “The Word, that was with God, and that was God, was made flesh; but in that flesh, he revealed a glory, as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.”^d According to infallible information, he is, therefore, truly God, and truly man: and his saving mediatory performances are founded on both natures inseparably. While the worth of these, the power of giving his people everlasting salvation, and of directing every thing in heaven and earth for that end; while his being a fit object of his people’s thankful confidence, and his ability for the general judgment, are founded on, and afford an invincible demonstration of his divine perfection; it is, at the same time, the finite nature in which he accomplished the human services of his ministry, and his priestly sacrifice. Hence we perceive, how the glory and majesty with which he governs the kingdom of God, for the effectual

^c Phil. ii. 6, 7.

^d John i. 1, 14.

gathering in and protection of his people, and for the destruction of all opposition, appears as an *exaltation*; inasmuch as human nature, according to its capacity, shared therein, and obtained the reward of its labour. Thus, the Lamb that was slain deserves and receives everlasting honour, with regard to the saving work of both his natures. This is evident, from his obedience, and his deep humiliation, being every where assigned as the reason of his exaltation. “I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen! and have the keys of hell and of death.^e For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.”^f That his subjection at the last day is to be understood, not under the notion of a degradation, but as an honourable approbation of him as God-man, we have already seen, in the conclusion of Sect. xii.

We may add, though a proper subjection or inferiority belong to Christ, only with respect to his human nature; yet we must not exclude an order of procedure, by which, as the divine

^e Rev. i. 18. ^f Rom. xiv. 9. See also Philip. ii. 7—10. Heb. i. 3. John v. 27. Rev. i. 5, 6. v. 12—14.

subsistence of the Son is founded in that of the Father, so his perfect working follows that of the Father. As one proof of this, besides others, he was, before his incarnation, "the Angel of God's presence." This is the reason why the Father is also represented as the first in the whole work of redemption ; as he who hath committed that work to the Son ; as he who sent him, and according to whose good pleasure all fulness dwelt in Christ ; as he to whom satisfaction was made by Jesus ; and as he who hath crowned him with eternal glory. All which would appear quite unaccountable, had the Son of God, either in the eternal counsel respecting the plan of redemption, or in any part of its execution, been merely dependent and passive, not having acted freely. But we have before seen, that all this is ascribed to his free love and grace.ⁱ As the Father sent him, so he came forth voluntarily "from the Father, and came into the world."^k No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."^l Power, after being dead, to take his life again ! To raise up that temple which was destroyed !

ⁱ Eph. v. 25. 2 Cor. viii. 9. ^k John xvi. 28.

^l John ii. 19—21. x. 18.

But what can be the meaning of this, if he is to be considered as a mere man? It is not, then, a vain subtlety which divines teach, relating to the counsel of peace, or the plan agreed upon by the Father and the Son, and which they illustrate by various passages of Scripture.

SECTION XX.

THE RELATION OF CHRIST TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

IN a demonstration of the divinity of the Son, the personal subsistence of the Holy Spirit, or his personal distinction from God the Father, must not be taken for granted, because it is not allowed by those on the other side. We are at liberty, however, to suppose, that the Holy Ghost is something divine; something belonging to the nature and perfection of God; of which many proofs are at hand, both in the Old and the New Testament. If, at least, a divine power, or animating principle in the Holy Ghost, be acknowledged, then, if Christ be the true God, there must of necessity be an

intimate relation, and an inseparable connection between him and the Divine Spirit. If such a relation were represented to us in the sacred word, it would furnish us with a new confirmation of our high esteem of Christ. In fact, this kind of proof is not withheld from us in the testimony of God.

He who is called, *the Spirit of God*, and *the Spirit of Christ*; is also expressly called, *the Spirit of God's Son*,^m *the Spirit of the Lord*, *the Spirit of Christ*.ⁿ If it be thought, that these expressions will bear a lower sense, all pretext for evasion is taken away, when Christ is said, "to send the Holy Spirit from the Father."^o Besides, his superiority to other excellent teachers consists in this, that "John indeed, (and others) baptised with water;" but "he with the Holy Ghost."^p Now, this must mean more than that the espousers of his doctrine should be *partakers* of the Holy Spirit; for that was the case with those also who were taught and baptised by the apostles.^q Christ is therefore represented as having the seven spirits of God; that is, the same Spirit from

^m Gal. iv. 6.

ⁿ 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. Rom. viii. 9.

^l 1 Pet. i. 11.

^o John xv. 26. Luke xxiv. 49.

^p Matt. iii. 11. Acts i. 5. ^q Acts xix. 1—6. Gal. iii. 2.

whom grace was implored on behalf of the seven churches.^r

What makes us more particularly to infer the supremacy of the Son of God, from his relation to the Divine Spirit, is, That as the operations of the Son appear to follow in order those of the Father, so it is evident, from the places that are quoted, and from others, that the operations of the Holy Ghost follow those of the Son ; and that the Son works by the Spirit. But as our own thoughts and words cannot do justice to a mystery which to us is inscrutable, let us hear the words of God. The Saviour says, "Verily the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do ; for what things soever he doeth, these 'also doeth the Son likewise."^s Again, on the other hand, he speaks thus : "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth ; for he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I that he shall take of mine."^t Jesus performed his miracles "by

^r Rev. iii. 1. compare i. 4.

^s John v. 19—23.

^t John xvi. 13—15.

the Spirit of God ;"^u yet nevertheless according to his own free will.^v Thus is the almighty operation of the Spirit connected with the voluntary good pleasure of the Son.

The Holy Spirit is the source of the true knowledge and acknowledgment of the Redeemer. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."^w The Holy Ghost is in believers as "in his temple."^x But we have seen already, that Christ, as well as the Father, is the Lord, and proprietor of the temple, and that he built it, with whose good pleasure all dwelling in it is connected. He who has the Spirit of Christ, he in whom the Spirit of Christ dwelleth, belongeth to Christ.^z The Holy Ghost appointed "overseers of the flock" at Ephesus ; but not without the will of the Son ; for that flock was "the church of God, which he had purchased with his own blood."^a Now, without doubt, the Lord of the flock must have authority over all the overseers of the flock, and an influence in their appointment ; which appointment is, therefore, usually ascribed in other places to Christ himself. The apostles enjoyed the ex-

^u Matt. xii. 28.

^v Matt. viii. 3. John v. 21.

^w 1 Cor. xii. 3.

^x 1 Cor. iii. 16. vi. 19.

^z Rom. viii. 9.

^a Acts xx. 28.

traordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, which, by means of their prayers, were also bestowed on other believers and teachers. Nevertheless, they were constantly represented as apostles and servants, not properly of the Holy Ghost, but of Christ. He was their one Master;^b and, consequently, he could bestow upon them the necessary gifts.^c “Christ wrought by Paul, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.”^d The *sending* itself, which, on account of the abundance of spiritual gifts, was rightly named, the *pouring out* of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, took place according to the promise of the Father; but yet it is expressly ascribed to Christ the exalted King.^e The Spirit of the Father works, therefore, also, the Spirit of Christ.

The encouragement given to the servants of Jesus, when perplexed how they should answer, on being summoned to appear before princes and magistrates, is expressed thus: “The Holy Ghost shall teach you in that same hour.”^f Again, “It is not ye that speak, but

^b Matt. xxiii. 10.

^c See John xx. 22.

^d Rom. xv. 18, 19.

^e Acts ii. 33. Luke xxiv. 49.

^f Luke xii. 11, 12.

the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.”^g Once more, “I (Jesus) will give you a mouth and wisdom,” &c.^h Am I much mistaken in supposing, that the high relation of Christ to the Holy Ghost, is evident from the Divine Spirit being said to work *in the name of the Son*? The great force of this phrase has been already observed; and in this view it is confirmed. The power of curing diseases was the gift and work of the infinite Spirit; but the apostles performed those healing miracles “in the name of Christ.”^k The Father also sent the Holy Ghost in the name of Christ.”^l But the person in whose name (that is, on whose account, for whose sake and honour) any one is sent, or any gift bestowed, is certainly not less than he who is sent in his name; or than that which, for his sake, is presented as a gift. The Corinthians “were washed, sanctified, and justified (it is not said, in the name of the Holy Ghost) but in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”^m

Let us now turn our thoughts to such divine testimonies, as represent the Saviour in his intimate and exalted relation to the Fa-

^g Matt. x. 18, 20.

^h Luke xxi. 12—15.

^k Acts iv. 10. xvi. 18. compare 1 Cor. xii. 9—11.

^l John xiv. 26.

^m 1 Cor. vi. 11.

ther, and to the Holy Ghost united. For instance, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit ; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord ; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God."ⁿ Peter wrote to the "elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."^o Jude says, "Beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost ; keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."^p On that disputed passage (1 John v. 7.) whose authenticity is not acknowledged by our opponents, we for that reason do not insist. But there are two others by no means of doubtful authority, and of which the Christian church has made a public and constant use ; that are supposed with reason to give an invincible demonstration of the Saviour's divinity. The first is the rule of baptism, "Teach all nations, baptizing them (distinguishing them by their profession and religion, and setting the seal of spiritual cleans-

ⁿ 1 Cor. xii. 4—6. ^o 1 Peter i. 2. ^p Jude 20, 21.

ing upon them) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”^q The other is that benediction of the church, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”^r

SECTION XXI.

THE CONCLUSION.

WE cannot contemplate so many particulars, in which the Lord Jesus Christ is equal either to the Father, or to the Holy Ghost, or to both ; nor can we contemplate so many other descriptions of his majesty, as have appeared under different views, without being led, in humble acquiescence, and subjection of our faith to the divine testimony, with adoration and joy, to glorify the Saviour of the world, as far above all created beings.

If we find ourselves obliged by the word of revelation, to acknowledge the fellowship of the Father and the Son, in the same divine



^q Matt. xxviii. 19.

^r 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

perfections, and consequently, to acknowledge a plurality and distinct subsistence in the supreme Deity ; our conclusion will be confirmed and illustrated, by taking into consideration (what, in the preceding Section we would not, or could not, take for granted) that the Holy Ghost, in several texts of Scripture there mentioned, (as also by a comparison and critical explanation of many others) is represented to us, not as a particular *property* of God, but as distinguished from God the Father, as well as from the Son. By which we learn, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are the true and eternal God. But, in the demonstration of this, we do not further enlarge at present ; as our only business is to prove the co-existence of the Son with the Father. If the usual terms, *Trinity*, *essence*, *persons* ; or, if the expressions and inferences of the Athanasian creed, be not approved,* let every one at least seek that which the word of God teaches, and let the best expressions for professing it be used ; of which, if they be good, we also shall take the advantage.

We as well as those on the other side of the

* See Appendix, Note T.

question, acknowledge, and have often considered, the great difficulty which there is in reconciling the doctrine of Christ's divinity, with the unity of the infinite, the Supreme Being. But shall we reject the one doctrine for the sake of the other, if both be well founded? Would it be no defect in philosophy, if it were not known that two things, whose connection is concealed from us, often exist at the same time? Logic teaches, that a rejection of any thing, arising merely from obscurity, is not a refutation; if it do not carry in the face of it a palpable contradiction. We also wish to know, how those who think differently concerning the Saviour; who yet adhere to the word of God, and continue professed christians, can rest satisfied in this examination, without falling into a difficulty which cannot be solved.

The doctrine in question does not depend on one or two texts, perhaps of an improper and doubtful signification. It is not like any great and disputable point between the church of Rome and protestants; which, on the one side, is founded on a single word of Jesus, which, doubtless, is infallible; but against the literal meaning of which, a great number of reasons, on the other side, may be deduced

from both nature and Scripture. On the contrary, the doctrine of Christ's eternal divinity is founded on a vast number of scriptural texts; texts which support one another by a variety of phrases; by the different lights in which the doctrine is represented; by a particular emphasis of expression, not consisting barely in vague allusions and distant comparisons, but in direct and positive assertions; and which, by doctrines, rules of duty, incitements, warnings, and consolations, direct our religious esteem, subjection, prayers, gratitude, and hope, to Christ. In a word; it is founded on the entire connection, the whole contents, and great aim of the doctrine of salvation, and particularly as it is contained in the New Testament.

Let it not be supposed, that if the gospel really teach the eternal divinity of the Son, as well as that of the Father, there must be an irreconcilable opposition between reason, or philosophy, and such a revelation; and therefore that it is best to renounce the Scriptures and adhere to reason. Before this conclusion be adopted, we must request to be indulged in saying a few words.

First, We have before acknowledged, that we ought not to credit any testimony in this

matter, except the certainty of it be built on such rational grounds, that a man of understanding cannot, without absurdity, withhold his belief of it. Now it is a fact, that thousands, who are prudent and anxious about their salvation: men improved by science, divines, and others, whether they belonged to the ancient christian church, or lived after the revival of letters, adhered to the holy Scriptures: nor did they thus adhere to the Bible, except on being thoroughly convinced of its divine authenticity. Consequently, it was not from want of understanding, but with discretion, and for good reasons. Boyle, Newton, Leibnitz, Boerhaave, and many other great philosophers, were neither infidels, nor indifferent about the grounds of their profession.

Secondly, Has what reason teaches no difficulties that cannot be solved? The philosopher, because he knows much, but nothing perfectly, everywhere finds obscurities. But let us, at present, touch on the contemplation of the Supreme Being. We agree, that reason, properly used, shows his high and infinite perfection. We must, therefore, acknowledge in God, an eternity without beginning; whose existence does not become of longer duration by the revolution of ages: an *omnipresence*

which extends to every thing in the universe; so that the Divine Being is not more in the immeasurable expanse of heaven, than in the most confined spot on earth: an *omniscience* which has an accurate and complete view of all things, while philosophy finds many endless, and, in their nature, unlimited series of numbers and quantities; for example, the infinite multitude of possible things, with all their possible relations, together with the unceasing course of future things and effects: a power which influences every thing, by a simple, eternal, and unchangeable energy; while the effects differ greatly in time, quality, and measure; and, by the same energy, smaller, or quite opposite things, might have been produced, according to the divine and independent good pleasure, and so on. Now, do either we, or those that oppose us, understand all this? Can we here account for every thing, which yet we must believe, if we would not fall from darkness into absurdity, and abandon reason itself?

Thirdly, The unity of God, on account of which the revealed doctrine of the Trinity meets with such opposition, is much more a doctrine of revelation, than of human reason. It is, indeed, perfectly consistent with a me-

taphysical view of God's perfections, and with our natural ideas of the works of creation. We, nevertheless, do not suppose, according to some learned men, that human reason *readily* assents to the unity of God ; but rather, that philosophy has never given a good demonstration of it. Great men, however, have long and justly observed, that the being of a God, many of his perfections, and a directing providence, are discovered and proved more easily from reason, than the doctrine of God's perfect unity. All nations that were not favoured with divine revelation, served a plurality of gods ; and the eyes of their wise men were darkened. How comes it, then, that we look upon the unity of God as perfectly certain, and, being in that respect superior to the heathens, are without a doubt ? How comes it, that we consider every thing besides that one God, as merely his creature ; and do not admit even demi-gods or middle beings ? Have we attained to this by the superior shrewdness of our own understanding ? No : but by being educated in the school of Christ. The Bible, then, has helped us to this rational and sure knowledge of God ? But as the unrestrained wildness of human reason is able to break down, or to remove, so solid a mound,

raised against idolatry and superstition, that noble philosophy, which I so much esteem, would not be able to stem the torrent of the absurd errors of men. They might not, indeed, immediately offer sacrifice to Baal, to Apis, or to Jupiter. But, according to the temper of our times, (and mournful experience begins to confirm it) the denial of a providence, and of a future state, would boldly appear in the world. The running down and persecution of all serious religion, would be let loose ; and (as even a Voltaire warned a Diderot) speculative Atheism, becoming general, would grow into practice, and, contaminating every thing, would soon destroy domestic, civil, and national happiness ; till men, impressed with a sense of their dreadful misery, and seeking for better principles in the midst of their ignorance and perplexity, would be thrown again into the dangerous arms of a dark superstition. O that our young divines, that our novices in science and literature, that the Christian people, would make themselves familiar with the word of God, and adhere to it !

Now, it is that same divine testimony, from which we so rationally learned to know the only true God, which manifests at the same

time the transcendent majesty and all-sufficient fulness of Jesus Christ; that very testimony which, jealous of all idolatry, whether more gross or more refined, sets Christ in opposition to idols, and claims our deep reverence of him, and confidence in him, in fellowship with the Father. It is that same heavenly information, by which man's reason, so inclined to err in matters of religion, is kept right; which exhibits at the same time, that way to the friendship of God in Christ Jesus, which is absolutely necessary, and is in vain sought for any where else: it being a "mystery of God the Father, and of Christ;" formerly unknown to the nations, but now revealed, though not completely understood by us.

Shall we, then, who every where find unsearchable depths in that which is finite, suppose there is nothing inscrutable in the nature of the infinite God, and in the plan of his saving mercy? All the greatness of man being so extremely insignificant in the extent of creation; ought not his understanding to bow before the all-wise Creator? Shall we refuse to follow that revelation which (in spite of all the darkness which perplexes the clearest heads in their researches) is a light to

our eyes, and a support to our reason ; because it leads us further than our own wisdom is able to do ? Shall we take our leave of the Bible which has always happily instructed and polished the nations, by whom it was adopted and followed ; and, by rejecting which, philosophy itself would sustain so severe a loss ?

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTE A. P. 31.

By "*Christian teachers*," the author, in this sentence, evidently intends, simply, persons who profess to teach the religion of the Bible ; not men who are necessarily orthodox in their sentiments, or holy in their character. The propriety, however, of such a vague use of the term *Christian*, especially in a theological treatise, may be very fairly questioned. Much harm has, undoubtedly, been done by the loose and incorrect manner in which such terms have been employed by religious controversialists. It has led many cursory observers to suppose, that the contest was little better than a logomachy, or one in which no important principle was involved ; and hence they have concluded, that one system or creed was as good and correct as any other. It is especially objectionable, when such a perversion of terms occurs in a work against Unitarians ; for, unquestionably, if our

view of Christianity be right, they can have no pretensions to the name or character of *Christians*. Our system and theirs are opposed to each other in almost every essential point; and if the one party be right, the other must be radically and awfully wrong. Both systems cannot be Christianity; and therefore it is a mere mockery of language in us to address one another, as if they could. "Why," says Dr Wardlaw, "are we to convert this sacred name into a mere epithet of unmeaning compliment? The inconsistency is equal on both sides. It is just as absurd in them to bestow it upon us, as it is for us to bestow it upon them. If our opponents be Christians, we are deluded idolaters, miserably deceived in the object of our worship, and the foundation of our hope! Why should we disguise this matter, and delude ourselves and one another, by taking a name in common, when we have hardly a principle in common?*" Such sentiments generally call forth from Unitarians the epithets of *illiberal* and *bigotted*; but better that the stigma of such reproaches should adhere to us, than that the progress of truth should be impeded, or the minds of the ignorant and thoughtless be misled. It is more than time that such paltry euphemisms were discarded in theological controversy, and that we should push our conclusions to their full length, regardless of every thing but the progress of truth, and the triumph of correct principles. I am far from being an enemy to courtesy of language in controversy,—on the contrary, I lament that religious discussions have been so often defiled with intemperate and opprobrious language; but let not this

* Discourses on the Soc. Cont. p. 460. 4th edit.

courtesy be carried to such an extent, as to involve the sacrifice of principle, or the obscuration of truth ! In its own place it is admirable and excellent ; when carried to an excess, it is disgusting as well as ridiculous.

NOTE B. P. 42.

The remarks of Dr Wynpersse in this section, are well worthy the attention of the serious reader. Nothing, we are convinced, has more facilitated the progress of error in this country, than the great want of Scriptural knowledge among the mass of our population ; and the gross neglect of order and discipline in churches professing to be Christian. When men are accustomed to regard Christianity as comprised in the creeds they have been taught to respect, and which they respect, simply because they have been *taught* them, without ever examining Scripture upon the subject ; a very little external influence or persuasion will be often sufficient to induce them to adopt sentiments the very opposite to those which they originally professed to hold. And when men are admitted to the ordinances of the gospel, without affording any evidence that they are at all influenced by the spirit of the gospel, a callousness of feeling is introduced into the church, religion becomes a matter of convenience or expediency, and that holy zeal for truth, which should characterise the Christian, is exchanged for the indolent indifference of an unconcerned spectator. But for the evil influence of such a state of things, we should not have had to lament over the fall of so many who seemed once favourably disposed to the religion of Christ ; or have seen so many places of wor-

ship, founded and endowed by pious men, for the preaching of "the truth as it is in Jesus," wrested from their original purpose, and devoted to the inculcation of opinions which their founders repudiated and abhorred. It is painful to think that so many congregations, once prosperous and illustrious, have now become the strongholds of error; and that the very descendants of their devoted founders, can tread upon the graves of their fathers in their way to celebrate those orgies which their fathers would have died to put down.* But whilst we lament such changes, let us remember that the causes which facilitated them are still in operation; and that unless scriptural teaching, and scriptural discipline be more extensively employed throughout the churches of Christ in this country, the enemy may still be permitted to "come in upon us like a flood," and "the adversary" be allowed to "tread down the sanctuary." It is only when we are ourselves using the best means of preventing the progress of error, that we can look up with confidence for the divine assistance and blessing.

The author's opinion, that Socinianism has arisen in many cases from the indulgence of a spirit of adventurous speculation, and an impatience of restraint even from the authority of God, is also worthy of attention; especially as its truth is in some degree admitted by Socinians themselves. "Many of those who embrace Unitarian principles," says Mr Yates, "will be men more disposed to inquire after truth, than to apply it steadily to practice when found;" and again, "the

* Throughout England, no less than 140 chapels at least, originally built and endowed by Trinitarians, have fallen, with their endowments, into the hands of the Socinians.

converts to Unitarianism may become careless and indifferent about their religious duties, and adopt habits of useless roving speculation to the neglect of their hearts and lives." Dr Priestley and Mr Belsham use very similar language;* and the general character of the Unitarian body—whom Mr Fuller justly describes, as "a speculating sort of people among professing Christians,"—forcibly corroborates their statements. I mean not to affirm that any charge of immorality can be laid against that body as such; on the contrary, I believe that those composing it are generally exemplary in their attention to all moral and social duties. But I would ask, can the same be said of their attention to the duties of *religion*? Are they noted for their devotion, their holiness, their zeal in the cause of God? Are they patterns of the graces of humility, of patience, of enlarged benevolence? To these questions they themselves would be most ready perhaps to reply in the negative. They boast themselves of their intellectual achievements and prowess; but they nauseate the idea of being mistaken for saints. Their religion consists in adjusting the relation of propositions to each other, and in measuring by the rules of logic the agreement or discordance of syllogistic terms; not in the obedience of the heart and life to the will of God, and the repose of the intellect and the affections upon his infallible testimony. Such a religion can never be the religion of the Bible. However clear in its details, and elegant in its development, it is destitute of every principle of vitality, and life-giv-

* See quotations from their writings, in Dr Wardlaw's *Discourses*, p. 468.

ing energy. It may gratify the ambition of the intellect ; but it cannot touch the heart. It may please the taste, but it can never celestialize the affections, or appease the conscience. It is “of the earth earthy ;” and no spark of heavenly fire has ever touched its lifeless clay. Under such circumstances it may flourish for a while ; but it must ultimately fall before the progress of religious truth, and sound piety. Already may we discern in it the symptoms of decay. Its supporters are less valiant in its defence, less steady in their adherence to it, and much fewer in their numbers. The reputation of Socinus is passing away,—

τρίποδας μὲν ὁδούς
στειλε, παῖδός δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων,
ὄναρ ἡμιερόφαντον ἀλαίνει.—

Aeschylus Ag. 80. Edit. Wellauer.

And, in a few years his heresy will, we trust, be numbered among the things that *have been* ; and *requiescat in pace* be inscribed upon its sepulchre !

NOTE C. P. 44.

“ In order to honour God’s testimony by a dutiful belief, we must not interpret it according to our own opinion, (for his testimony was necessary, on account of the defective or divided opinions of men ;) but we must form our judgment of the divine declaration, in the words in which it is expressed by the unwrested, signification of the words themselves. It is in this way only, that we can have the limited sense of Scripture doctrine, and preserve it in all ages. It is lawful enough in it-

self, and agreeable to good rules of interpretation, to try, in such places as contain mysteries which reason cannot unfold, whether what is supernatural can be avoided, by understanding it in a softer or less proper sense, or according to the less usual signification of a word, in allusion to a people's sayings or opinions. But when, after impartial inquiry, it appears, from the positive manner in which any doctrine is proposed, from the connection, the scope, the comparison of places, and the like; that it must be understood in an appropriated and emphatical sense; then the Christian must resign his understanding to the will of God. How much soever we respect the light which is thrown on words by learned men, and such as differ from us; this cannot shake the doctrine of salvation founded in God's word, nor change its nature, according to the fashionable opinions of different ages, and the variable turn of human sciences, under the pretence of a new and better solution. Profane writings will also, we hope, continue to be the subjects of sound criticism, by the light of true philosophy and skill in languages; without its being, for that reason, unknown, till the end of time, what Herodotus has related, or Plato taught."—*Author's Note.*

The youthful reader who may be desirous to furnish himself with a series of such sound rules of interpretation, as may enable him to proceed to the criticism of the New Testament, *proprio Marte*, and with the best hope of success; will find much advantage from the study of Michaelis' "*Introduction to the N. T.*" by Bp. Marsh, vol. I. and II. Horne's "*Introduction, &c.*" vol. II. 6th edit.; and especially of Prof. Stuart's trans-

lation of Ernesti's "*Institutio Interpretis, &c.*" with additions from the works of Morus, Keil, Beck and Seiler, and notes by the translator, as republished in London, by Dr Henderson of Highbury College. The excellence of Ernesti's work has been long admitted; and the translation of Prof. Stuart is worthy of its author. The reader will also find some excellent remarks in Ernesti's "*Opuscula Philologica et Critica*," Lugd. Bat. 1776, and in Pritt's "*Introductio in Lectionem N. T., &c.*" edited by C. G. Hofmann, Lipsiac, 1737.

NOTE D. P. 48.

The refutation of objections does not enter into our author's plan, and accordingly, he has quoted the passages contained in this paragraph, without making any allusion to the various glosses and interpretations which Unitarian writers have attempted to put upon them. It may not, however, be improper, in the present edition of his work, to take some notice of these; were it for no other purpose, than to shew to what extremities even intelligent and learned men may be driven in attempting to defend an untenable system. We shall take the passages in the order in which they stand in the N. T.

1. John i. 1.—"In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God." Without stopping to enquire particularly into the meaning of the two first clauses of this verse, we shall take up the last as the one upon which our author lays most stress. To obviate the force of its testimony, the Socinians, in the *first* place, deny that *Logos* refers to Christ; and contend that it signifies *wisdom, reason, emanation,*

&c. and refers to one of the attributes of God. In reply to this it may be remarked, *1st*, That the mere translation of the word is a matter of minor importance, provided its proper application be ascertained. But, *2dly*, The attempt to understand this word of one of the divine attributes, is unsupported by the *usus loquendi* of the New Testament. No instance can be adduced, of such a personification of the properties of Deity, as this supposition would in the present instance involve. *3dly*, For what reason should the attribute of *wisdom* alone be mentioned in this connection? Were not the *mercy*, and *power*, and *justice* of God, as strikingly displayed in the work of redemption, as his wisdom? Or rather, was not that work a manifestation of *all* his perfections in glorious and delightful harmony? *4thly*, In what sense can any of God's attributes be said to *become flesh*, as the Logos is said (ver. 14.) to have become? *5thly*, What propriety is there in saying, that an attribute of God is *with God*? Can it be any where else? *6thly*, In what sense can any of God's attributes be said to be *God*, or even (if the Socinians wish it so) *a God*? Is God nothing but wisdom? or are the attributes of God a set of inferior deities, that surround him like the satellites of a planet? These reasons and difficulties, will be sufficient to point out the absurdity of the supposition in question. Indeed, no person who will candidly peruse the first fifteen verses of this chapter, can remain long in doubt, as to the fact of the word Logos being used in reference to Christ. Was it not of him that John bare witness? Was it not true of him, that "the world knew him not," and that when "he came to his own, his own received him not?" Did not he "be-

come flesh" and dwell among men ; and was not his glory seen by them "as the glory of the only begotten Son of God?" These passages can refer to none but Christ, and clearly show that he is the Logos spoken of in the first verse. But the question is put beyond a doubt, by the fact of the same term being applied to him in other passages of scripture ; see 1 John i. 1. and Rev. xix. 13. *Why* this title should have been applied to Christ, is another enquiry which may be answered or not, without affecting the general question. It is sufficient for us to know that the term does refer to him ; and that, when it is said "the Logos was God," we are to understand it as meaning, "the Christ was God." If however, the reader wishes to know what interpretations have been given of the term in this connection, let me refer him to Dr J. P. Smith's "*Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*," vol. i. pp. 562, 563, 599, 600. III. p. 72.

Foiled in their attempts to destroy the evidence of this verse in favour of Christ's divinity, by referring the Logos to something else than Christ ; Socinians resort, in the *second* place, to the expedient of translating *θεος*, a god ; thus taking off the force of this proof, by understanding the term in an indefinite and metaphorical sense. In support of this translation, they argue that *θεος* is here *without* the article, and cannot, therefore, mean the supreme God. But in thus reasoning, they forget another usage of Greek syntax, viz. that when two nouns are related to each other as subject and predicate, the subject (in this case *λογος*, the word) has the article, while the predicate (*θεος*, God) wants it. The article is omitted in this clause, therefore, not to denote that

θεος is to be understood in an indefinite sense, but in compliance with the usage of Greek writers. Not only, however, are Socinians incorrect in this inference; they are wrong also in their assertion, that *θεος* without the article is not used in reference to the supreme God. In this very chapter, it is used no less than four times, see verses 6, 12, 13, 18,; and if in these verses it may be translated *God*, why should not the same be done in the verse before us?

Besides, it may be fairly asked, in what sense are we to understand the proposition, "the Logos was a God." Are there gradations of Gods in heaven? If so, what becomes of the unity of the Godhead: if not, is it conceivable that the Scriptures, would employ language so much calculated to mislead the enquirer into an error of the most fatal kind? What would a heathen infer from such a statement, but that Christianity recognised a plurality of gods, as well as that religion which it called upon him to forsake? And would not such a supposition, go far towards invalidating the claims of the Bible to be the word of God?

But we are reminded that the Scriptures sometimes do use the word *God*, in an inferior sense, as applicable to magistrates and divine messengers. This is not denied; nor is it wonderful that a name, though originally appropriated to the Deity, but at the same time suggesting to the mind, the associated ideas of *power*, *wisdom*, &c.; should, in process of time, be generalized and applied to other beings to whom these attributes belonged, though in a far inferior degree. The instances, however, of such an application of the name of *Elohim*, are very few; and of such a use of the word *θεος*, the

New Testament furnishes only three,* in the first of which, a quotation is made from the Old Testament, whilst the other two allude to the notions and sentiments of the heathens. Besides, in all cases of this usage, the language employed is very different from that in the verse before us. "In all of them, either by a strong antithesis in the connection, or by some other equally marked circumstance, the figurative application is so very manifest, that the most careless or perverse reader cannot fail to be impressed with it;" (Dr Smith, *Scrip. Test.* vol. iii. p. 90.) Such phrases as, "I said ye are gods"—"worship him, all ye gods," &c. are never to be quoted as parallel expressions to the plain and unlimited statement before us, "the Word *was* God." Their total want of analogy is at once perceptible.

In the above remarks, no notice has been taken of the various readings which have been proposed upon this verse, such as *θεου* for *θεος*, and the transposition of *και* *and*, from the commencement of the clause to the middle, simply because they are unworthy of any regard. They are supported by no authority, and are merely the gratuitous and disingenuous conjectures of men who could find no other way of silencing the testimony of Scripture upon this point.

2. John xx. 28. "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." On this verse no remark need be made, in addition to those of the author. The Socinian interpretation of the words, as equivalent to the exclamations frequently employed by thoughtless persons in the present day, who use the words, "O Lord!" "O

* John x. 34, 35. 1 Cor. viii. 5. 2 Thess. ii. 4.

God!" on every trifling occasion, has too much in it of mingled profanity and absurdity, to be seriously refuted.

3. Rom. ix. 5. "Of whom are the fathers, and of whom is the Christ with respect to the flesh, [i.e. his human nature] who is supreme (*ἐπὶ πάντων*, *over all*,) God, blessed for ever. Amen." Such is the translation of this passage, as it stands in the received text; and in this form, nothing can be more distinct than the testimony which it furnishes to the supreme divinity of Christ. To make it speak some other language, however, Socinians have exerted all their ingenuity; and the authority of manuscripts, fathers, and versions, as well as the rules of grammar, have been set at nought and trampled upon, in order to force out of this passage some meaning which may suit the tastes or systems of these theological Procrustians. Their efforts, however, have only had the effect of leading learned men to examine the subject more thoroughly, and to prove more convincingly, that the received reading is the only tenable one. Of their attempts to alter the text, the most ingenious is that of substituting *ὡν ὁ* for *ὁ ὡν*, and translating thus: "Of whom is the Christ according to the flesh, (and) of whom is the supreme God blessed for ever. Amen." But this, it is to be remembered, is a mere conjectural alteration, which is not only supported by no authority, but is also opposed by several important considerations, of a critical and grammatical nature, which it is unnecessary here to enumerate.* Alterations have also been proposed in the punctuation, the object of which has been to separate the words "God blessed for ever,"

* The reader will find them all stated with great force and clearness, in Dr Smith's *Scrip. Test.* vol. iii. p. 335, 337.

from the preceding words, and to understand them as a doxology. Thus, while some read, "And of whom is the Christ according to the flesh. God who is over all, be blessed for ever!" others read, "And of whom is the Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all. God be blessed for ever!" On this we may remark, 1. That, in addition to the awkwardness of a doxology in this place, it by no means would cohere with the tone of the apostle's previous remarks, to introduce an exclamation of gratitude at the conclusion. It would be strange, indeed, if, after stating his great heaviness of heart for his brethren the Jews, he should immediately, and without any warning, break forth into a doxology to God. A *prayer* for their salvation would, (as Crellius long ago admitted) have been much more appropriate. 2. If the apostle had intended that his words should be understood as a doxology, he would, according to invariable Greek usage, have arranged them in a different manner. For, as every student of Greek knows, in all such and similar cases, the adjective precedes the substantive, while the latter has always the article. In order, therefore, to get the version, "God be blessed for ever!" we must change *θεὸς ἐυλογητὸς* into *ἐυλογητὸς ὁ θεός*, an alteration too violent to be for a moment ventured upon.

It is also worthy of notice, that in the clause *το κατὰ σάρκα*, "as it respects the flesh," there is one part of an antithesis, the counterpart of which is to be sought for in the subsequent clause, and is found in the expression, "the supreme God." According to the flesh, Christ was descended from the fathers of the Jewish nation, whilst at the same time he was "God over all." We may, therefore, conclude with the learned Michaelis,

“that Paul here delivers the same doctrine of the divinity of Christ, which is elsewhere unquestionably maintained in the New Testament.”—*Anmerk. für Ungelehrte*, quoted by Middleton, *on the Greek Article*.

4. Heb. i. 8, 9. “But to the Son (he saith) thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness (or uprightness) is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” In this passage Jesus, the Son, is plainly called God, and that in an unqualified sense, by the Father himself. To get over this strong difficulty in their way, Socinians have affirmed that the expression *ὁ θεός*, *God*, is in the nominative and not the vocative case; and have accordingly proposed to render the whole clause, “God is thy throne for ever and ever;” thus making *God* the subject of the proposition, and *throne*, &c. the predicate. In reply to this we observe, 1. That *ὁ θεός* is, in Biblical Greek, the almost invariable form of the vocative; *vide* Ps. iii. 7. iv. 1. v. 10, &c. Nor is this peculiar to the Greek of the LXX, and the New Testament; it is equally common with the most classic writers; indeed Buttman remarks, that with the Attics, “*θεός* is *always* the same in the vocative as the nominative.”* No argument, therefore, in opposition to the common version, can be drawn from the use, *ὁ θεός* instead of *ὦ θεέ*. But, 2. The Greek for “God is thy throne,” would not be, as the original has it, *ὁ θρόνος σου, ὁ θεός, κ. τ. λ.*; but *θρόνος σου ὁ θεός*. For such a change, however, there is no authority. 3. The assertion, “God is thy throne,” is one to which no proper meaning can be attached. Some Socinians say, it means, “God is thy *support*;”

* *Greek Grammar*, p. 42. *Camb. Trans.* See also Matthiae *Gr. Gr.* § 69. *Obs.* 2.; and Thiersch *Gr. Gr.* § lii. 8. a.

but, besides that the meaning of *θεσπος* is averse to this interpretation, it may be asked, of whom is God *not* the support? or what proof would it furnish of Christ's superiority to the angels, to say, that he was *supported* by God, seeing the very same blessing was enjoyed by them? Others tell us that *throne* is used figuratively, to denote *dominion, empire, authority*; but of this it may be asked, in what sense can God be the *dominion of a creature*? or what meaning are we to attach to the assertion? If it be replied, that it means that he is the *stability* of Christ's dominion, this would not only do violence to the apostle's language, and introduce a *modus loquendi* unknown to the sacred writings, but would also be liable to the same objection as the *preceding* explanation; for of what king's dominion is not God the stability? or what argument would it furnish of Christ's superiority to angels, to affirm that he enjoyed a privilege, which he only shared in common with the kings of the earth?

Driven by these considerations to admit the propriety of the common version, Socinians still attempt to keep their ground, by resorting to their old objection, that the word *God* is here used in a subordinate sense, as significative of dignity, but not of Deity. In support of such an use of the word here, they allege that the writer speaks in the 9th verse, of Christ being above his *fellows*; language which could never have been employed in reference to the Supreme God. To this objection it is sufficient to reply, that though Jesus Christ was God, yet, as Mediator—as God in human flesh, he was voluntarily subordinate to the Father; and that accordingly, as Mediatorial King, consecrated and set apart to his office by the Father, he might without impropriety, be

said to be "above his *fellows*" or *associates* (μετοχους) i.e. in office, viz. *kings*.

The importance of the subjects discussed, and the impossibility of compressing them into a narrower space, must be our apology for the great length of this note. We trust that we have been enabled to vindicate the assertion of Dr Wynpersse in the text, "that the objections thrown out against these passages, are as easily, as they are effectually, refuted by just criticism."

The author adds in a note, "The proof from Acts xx. 28. and 1 Tim. iii. 16. is somewhat more difficult, because the original text is differently read. We think, however, these passages may be used with advantage. In the former, the best reading seems to be τοῦ κυρίου καὶ θεοῦ." This is very doubtful; and if the reader will consult the learned note of Griesbach *in loc.*, or that of Dr J. P. Smith, in his *Scrip. Test.* vol. iii. p. 63. he will find that the evidence greatly preponderates in favour of τοῦ κυρίου. The common reading of the latter passage, θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἰν σαρκί, has lately received a most triumphant vindication from the pen of my learned and highly honoured friend, the Rev. Dr Henderson of Highbury, in a work entitled, "*The Great Mystery of Godliness incontrovertible*, or Sir Isaac Newton and the Socinians foiled in the attempt to prove a corruption in the text, 1 Tim. iii. 16, &c." Lond. 1830. By a patient and erudite examination of the conflicting readings, with their respective evidence, the Doctor shews, that whilst the Socinian reading, ὁ, "is absolutely without one positive or indisputable testimony;" and that adopted by Griesbach, ὁς, "is clearly supported by the suffrage of only three MSS.;" that "of the Textus Receptus has

been found in *upwards of one hundred and seventy*, which are all the other manuscripts of the Pauline Epistles, the collation of which has yet been published." But let me direct the reader to the work itself. I know not where he will find a more excellent specimen of verbal criticism.

NOTE E. P. 50.

The difficulty of this passage is not trifling; but a little patient enquiry will serve to show, that instead of favouring Socinians, it rather, as Dr W. remarks, militates against them. This will be apparent from the following observations, abridged from those of Dr Wardlaw upon this verse:

1. The apostle, in arguing against the lawfulness of eating meats that had been offered to idols, admits, in the outset, the truth of what the abettors of that practice were wont to urge in their defence, viz. that, "an idol is nothing in the world, and *there is no God but one.*" This he does in verse 4th, and more at large in verses 5th and 6th, where he proceeds to establish the assertion. How, then, does he do this?

2. It is evident that the "lords many and gods many" are included in the more general phrase *θεοι λεγουμενοι* in the previous verse, and are explanatory of it. The "*lords many,*" therefore, referred to the number of the heathen deities as well as the "*gods many;*" and the apostle uses both expressions in order that he might include *all*.

3. It follows, that unless we would deprive the apostle's argument of all consistency, we must not consider him as excluding from the claims and honours of Deity,

the “*one Lord, Jesus Christ.*” What he affirms is, that “there is one God;” and this he shows by opposing to the “lords many and gods many” of the heathen, not God the Father only, but “one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ.” “The proposition, therefore, ‘There is no other God but one,’ must be considered as identified in the reasoning, not with the simple proposition ‘to us there is but one God the Father,’ but with the complex proposition, ‘to us there is but one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ.’”

4. If we suppose the Apostle here to exclude Christ from being God, by parity of reasoning must we suppose him to exclude the Father from being Lord; for, in the very same exclusive terms in which he affirms, “there is one God the Father,” he also affirms, there is “one Lord Jesus Christ.”

5. “This view is confirmed by the language here used respecting the ‘one Lord Jesus Christ.’ ‘To us there is but one God the Father, *of whom* are all things, and we *in him*; and one Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom* are all things, and we *by him*;’ all things which are of the Father are, in their utmost latitude, here affirmed to be *by* the Lord Jesus Christ; and that in the very same terms in which elsewhere all things are said to be *by* the Father. Rom. xi. 36. Heb. ii. 10. &c.”

We may conclude, then, in the words of Royards, (*Diatrise de Div. I. C. verâ.* p. 182). “Itaque hoc dictum divinitati Christi veræ non adversatur; sed multo magis eam commendat et confirmat.”

NOTE F. P. 52.

The translation of these passages depends on a rule of

Greek syntax, by which words that are *attributives*, and joined together by a copulative, when they have the article prefixed to the first, but not repeated with the second, they must be referred to the *same* person or thing. This is a rule of constant application throughout the N. T. ; and the laborious investigations of Dr Wordsworth have shewn that it is also observed with reference to the designations of God and Christ, in the writings of the Greek fathers.—*Six letters to G. Sharpe, Esq.*, p. 132. See also Middleton *on the Gr. Art* ; and *Sharpe's Remarks on the use of the definitive Art. in the N. T.* In accordance with this rule, the passages quoted in the text should be rendered thus ; Tit. ii. 13. "Looking for the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Jude 4. "And denying our only Master, [God] and Lord Jesus Christ." The word *God* is placed within brackets as of doubtful authority. See Griesbach. Compare 2 Pet. ii. 1.

"When I consider," says Prof. Stuart of Andover, U. S. "that the method of translating here proposed, is perfectly conformable to the Greek idiom, and must be adopted in various other passages, (*e. g.* Rom. xv. 6. ; Eph. v. 20. ; James i. 27.) and if adopted in these, will give them a sense conformable to that of other parts of the sacred volume ; I confess the evidence which these passages afford, if not decisive, at least confirms in no small degree the testimony of other texts ; especially in this case in regard to the text in Titus ; for where is the *appearing* of God the Father ever spoken of by the New Testament writers ? It is *Christ* who *appeared* to execute vengeance upon the Jewish nation, who *will appear* at the judgment. Yet here, the appearance of the

great God is mentioned; of the *great God and Saviour*; for so I cannot but believe the text is fairly to be construed. Can this *great God* be any other than Christ himself? "*Letters on the Trinity and on the Divinity of Christ*; addressed to the Rev. W. E. Channing, &c. by Moses Stuart, Associate Prof. of Sac. Lit. in Theol. Sem. Andover." Dundee (republished) 1829; a little work of singular merit, "*Optimae, que sane frugis plenissimum*," but unfortunately less known in Britain than it deserves.

NOTE G. P. 54.

Few passages of Scripture, connected with this controversy, have been more perplexing to critics and scholiasts than that in Phil. ii. 6, 7. Even among those who are agreed as to the grand point at issue, viz. the testimony furnished by this verse in favour of Christ's divinity, there is a great diversity of opinion as to the precise interpretation of the apostle's words. After considering the subject as minutely and impartially as I have been able, I feel constrained to admit, that, the common version does not appear to me to express the sentiments of the apostle so accurately as is done by the version proposed by Dr Smith and some other critics. The words may be literally rendered thus: "Who being (or though) in the form of God (i. e. possessing all the attributes of Deity) did not deem it a thing to be caught at to be on equality with God; but emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a servant, being in the likeness of man, &c."*

* I have deemed it unnecessary to give the original, as every person who takes an interest in such investigation, generally prosecutes them with the original in his hands.

ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ,] “In the form of God, i. e. possessing all the attributes of the Deity.” The propriety of this exegesis will be evident from the following considerations. 1. *μορφή*, in its ordinary acceptation, denotes *figure*, or the boundary of extension; and accordingly relates properly only to material objects. In the passage before us, however, it is used metaphorically in reference to a *spiritual* existence; and must consequently be understood by way of an *analogy*, i. e. as sustaining, in idea, the same relation to its object, as figure in bodies does to them. Now, the relation of figure to an extended body, is that of *defining property*, or that property by which the body is generally discriminated from others of the same matter; and by analogy, the word figure, when applied to God, must denote, that by which he is *defined, described, or represented* to us, viz. his attributes. The analogy, it is granted, is a very imperfect one; but such must every analogy be, when applied to the Deity; and it is not more so than other analogies of a similar nature in Scripture, comp. Heb. i. 1, 2, 3. 2. The careful reader will observe, that between the former clause of the verse and the latter, there is an evident antithesis; “the form of God” in the one, being contrasted with “the form of a servant” in the other. But that the antithesis may be real, and not merely verbal, there must be a contrast of *ideas* between its parts, which cannot be the case unless *form* in both have the same signification. And just as, “in the form of a servant” must mean with the attributes of a servant; so “in the form of God” must mean with the attributes of God.

οὐχ ἄρπαγμα κ. τ. λ.] “Did not deem it a thing to be caught at,” i. e. did not eagerly desire to display his

equality with the Father. ἄρπαγμος signifies not so much robbery, as “something taken with eagerness,” or “the act of taking something with eagerness;” for it is used both passively and actively. The verb from which it comes, ἄρπαζω, is generally employed with reference to persons who snatch a thing eagerly, and in the view of others. Thus Aristophanes, (*Plut.* 382, *Ed. Brunck.*) Μῶν οὐ κέκλοφας, ἀλλ’ ἥρπακας; “Hast thou then not pilfered it, but taken it away publicly?” Xenophon, (*Anab.* vi. iii. 18.) “Is it not a thing eagerly to be caught at (ἀρ’ οὐχὶ καὶ ἄρπασαι ἄξιον,) that we having passed over should leave a difficult and woody country behind us, &c.” *Id.* (*de Equitando*, vi. 11.) “But if a horse be bridled, not only when he works, but also when he is led out to pasture, and when he returns home from exercise, it will not be wonderful if he snatch the bit of his own accord, (ἐν ἄρπάξει τον χαλινὸν αὐτόματος,) when offered to him.” See also Homer (*Il.* xii. 445); and the remarks of the learned Raphel, (*Annot. in S. Scripturam.* &c. *Lugd. Bat.* 1747), on this verse. These passages completely establish the application of the verb; and proceeding from that to the noun formed from it, we conclude that the primary idea of ἄρπαγμος is either “the art of snatching eagerly,” or “something eagerly snatched,” according as it is used actively or passively. This word itself is not found in the works of any classic author, but ἄρπαγμα, which is perfectly synonymous, sometimes occurs, and always in this sense. See Dr J. P. Smith’s *Scrip. Test.* II. p. 412, 449, &c.; and Lambert Bos. *Exercitationes Philologicae*, &c, p. 199.

ἡγησασθαι] ἡγεομαι, signifies, 1. to lead, or preside. 2.

possess dignity. 3. To lead an inference, to conclude, esteem, judge, &c. It is here used in the last sense.

το ειναι ισα θεω,] *lit.* “The being on an equality with God,” so Tertullian, “non rapinam existimavit paritari Deo.” That *ἴσος* denotes *equal*, is known to every reader of Greek. It is the word perpetually employed by Euclid and the other Greek mathematicians, to denote mathematical equality; and its force is seen in its compounds, *ισοθεος*, &c. The use of *ῖσα*, the plural for the singular, *ῖσον*, is countenanced by the best Greek authors; thus Pindar, (Olymp. II. 109. *Ed. Heyniana*), “Ἴσον δὲ νύπτεισιν ἀνεί, ῖσα δ’ ἐν ἀμείραις, κ. τ. λ.—“Ἴσον δὲ—ῖσα δ’, *pariter*, h. e. ἐπίσης νυκτος και ἡμέρας.” *Heynes*.

ἑαυτον ἐκένωσιν,] “emptied himself,”—of what? of his equality with God; of the glory and honour which he enjoyed before equally with the Father. “Θεὸς μὲν γνώσας ἑαυτὸν ἀπο τοῦ εἶναι ῖσα Θεῷ.” *Conc. Antioch. Labb. I. p. 848. quoted by Waterland: Eight Sermons, &c. Oxf. 1795.*

We need proceed no farther in our exegesis, as there is no dispute as to the interpretation of what follows. The passage which we have been considering, may be thus paraphrased: “Let the same mind be in you as was in Christ Jesus, who though really God,—possessing all the attributes and power of Deity,—yet was so humble as not to deem the display of his glory a thing to be caught at, and brought with him from heaven to earth. Accordingly, therefore, though retaining all his equality with the Father in respect of power and essential dignity, he voluntarily, and for an extraordinary purpose, emptied himself of his glory—denuded himself, in the only way in which that was possible, of the splendour

and magnificence of Deity,*—took upon him the form of a servant, and the nature of a man, and as such became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." That this paraphrase is borne out by the words, has, I trust, been satisfactorily shewn; it seems to be recommended also by the following considerations: 1. It is more in accordance with the apostle's argument than that usually given. He is admonishing the Philippians to the exercise of humility; and the argument with which he enforces the duty is the example of Christ. Now, how was the humility of Christ evidenced? Not certainly, by his thinking "it no robbery to be equal with God;" but by his not thinking his equality with God a thing to be eagerly caught at or retained. If it be said that the proof of his humility, was taking upon him the form of a servant, &c.; it is replied, that before this version can be admitted, the original must be altered from the indicative *ἦγησατο*, to the participle *ἦγησάμενος*, and the conjunction *ἀλλὰ* must be omitted; so that the verse may read, "Who, being in the form of God, and *thinking* it no robbery, &c. took upon himself," &c. Without this there is an evident impropriety in supposing the *protasis* of the sentence, to end with "*God*," and the *apodosis* to commence with, "but took;" to which no parallel can be furnished from the writings of the New Testament. 2. It is supported by the opinions of several writers near the time of the apostles. Thus, in the Letter of the Christians at Vienne and Lyons, to the Christians in Asia and Phrygia, (preserved by Euseb.

* "Non omittens quod erat, sed accipiens quod non erat."—*Aust. in Job. Tract. 17.*

Eccl. Hist. Book. v. cap. 2. and written about A.D. 177.) we are told, that those who had suffered persecution among them, and were consequently honoured by their brethren, had nevertheless so much of the spirit of Christ, “who being in the form of God, did not esteem it a thing to be caught at, to be equal with God;” that they would not allow themselves to be honoured even with the name of martyrs. The reader will find the whole passage in Dr Smith, vol. ii. p. 416. I only remark upon it, at present, that the comparison implied in it, would not be valid, unless we suppose the writer to have understood the text quoted, as indicating the humility of Christ, and his unwillingness (so to speak) to appear among men in the unveiled glories of his divine nature.

Clement of Alexandria quotes the passage thus, “To thee the Lord himself will speak, who being, &c. but the compassionate God emptied himself, longing for the salvation of man;” cited by Dr Smith, ii. p. 417.

Cyril of Alexandria, likewise, in the following extract, seems to consider the words under notice as part of Christ’s humiliation; “For the Lord and Saviour of all, although it belonged to him to appear in the form of the Father, and in every respect on an equality with him, and to be honoured with the honours (*θαισεις*) of Deity, did not esteem it,” &c.—*Contr. Jul.* B. vi. p. 195, cited by Waterland, p. 147.

Origen, also, in many of his writings quotes this passage, in this sense, or in one nearly approaching to it. In one passage, cited by Dr Smith, he says, “that the goodness of Christ appeared more abundant and more divine, and truly after the image of the Father, when

he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, than if he had esteemed it an object to be caught at, to be as God," &c.

In more modern times this interpretation has met the support of many of the most competent judges. A *recensio* of the sentiments of some of the chief of these, will be found in the invaluable work of Dr Smith, so often referred to. The cause of the common version has been espoused by Dr Wardlaw, whose ingenious disquisition upon the subject is well worthy of attention: but, having perused it with all diligence and candour, I cannot help regarding it as one of the very few instances in which that consummate Theologian fails to vindicate the opinion which he adopts.

NOTE H. P. 55.

"The conciseness of our design forbids us to enlarge. We lay down the grounds of our conviction, and leave to every one's conscience and judgment, what he finds written. But I cannot forbear giving one instance. It is that (John viii. 58.) with respect to which, F. Socinus was so happy, when, after much solicitude and prayer, he thought he had discovered its true meaning: 'Before Abraham was, I am.' That is, before Abraham in deed and in effect was; before he was the father of many nations, by the calling of the Gentiles, I am. But is it justifiable to add what is not mentioned? In that whole discourse between Jesus and the Jews, are not we to understand by Abraham, a determinate person of that name, of whom Jesus now says, 'Before Abraham was, (or was born) I am?' The Jews could not

understand it otherwise than literally; especially, as it was an answer to their question, ‘Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?’ The calling of the Gentiles to be Abraham’s children was yet to come; and if that were alluded to, it should stand, ‘before Abraham shall be, I am.’ But what pertinency or force would that have? As little will our Saviour’s words bear that other interpretation, ‘Before Abraham was, I am,’ i.e. pre-ordained of God to my ministry.” *Author’s Note.* See also *Scripture Testimony*, vol. ii. p. 179—209.

NOTE I. P. 56.

“The objection from Mark xiii. 32.—‘But of that hour knoweth no man,—neither the Son,’ is important. As the last words of this passage are not found in the parallel place, (Matt. xxiv. 36.) some suspect, that they have been foisted in by the Arians. But without better evidence, we will not consider as spurious, what may be against us. There could be no solution of these words, if we did not acknowledge in the divine Redeemer, a human nature. But, this being the case, finite knowledge affords as little proof against his divinity, as omniscience is a denial of his humanity. To his humanity, then, which did not know every thing, are these words applicable. It also appears that they are not to be understood in an absolute sense; because, besides that high knowledge which the Son alone has of the Father, (Matt. ix. 27.) the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, (John v. 22.); and consequently the time of it cannot be determined without the Son; which

shews, that he is thoroughly acquainted with the manner and circumstances of that judgment, Matt. xxiv. xxv."—*Author's Note.* See also *Scrip. Test.* vol. ii. p. 370; and especially Dr Wardlaw's Note upon the passage; *Discourses on the Soc. Cont.* p. 539—544. 4th edit. 1828.

NOTE K. P. 68.

On turning to the passages referred to by our author, in which the phrase *to call upon his name*, is applied to Christ; as these are translated in the improved (or Unitarian) version, we find it rendered *to call by or after his name*, i.e. to profess discipleship to Christ. Now, it is impossible to help asking, with reference to such a version, is it not strange that a phrase which occurs perpetually in the New Testament, with the sense of calling upon, (as Socinians themselves allow in every other instance, but these under consideration,) should, in these few instances, lay aside its universal signification, and, to suit the notions of modern theologists, assume that of calling *by*? Surely this is accommodating Scripture to the system, not the system to Scripture!

Unitarians defend this translation upon the principle, that the verb *ἐπικαλεομαι* here used, has both an active and passive signification. This assertion has been examined at great length, and with his wonted candour and learning, by Dr Smith; the result of whose enquiry is, that in *every* instance (with the exception of *three* of a peculiar nature, Ps. xlviii. 11. 4 Kings xxiii. 17. Amos iv. 5.) in which this word occurs in the Greek Scriptures, with an accusative case following, it has an

active signification, and denotes to *call upon*, vol. iii. p. 42. et seq. Socinians lay great stress upon its being used in the middle voice, and consequently bearing the reflex signification, *to call themselves*, &c. But they ought to know, that the middle voice is as frequently used to denote, what a person does *for* himself to a third person, as what a person does *to* himself; and that this is, indeed, its general force when followed by an accusative case. How otherwise could we translate such passages as the following? *Φέρε νυν, ἐγὼ τὰ στρώματ' αἰρωμαι ταδί*—"come now, let me carry away (*for myself*) these blankets."—Aristoph. *Ran.* 502. *Ed. Brunck.* *οἱ παρεῖσαν φιλίαν διαπραξόμενοι πρὸς Μήδοκον*, "who had come to make (*for themselves*) friendship with Medocus."—Xen. *Anab.* vii. iii. 16. See also Dawes, *Misc. Crit.* § 235. p. 192. *Ed. Burg. and Harles:* § 237. p. 418. *Ed. Kidd.* *Matthiæ*, Gr. Gr. § 492. ; and an erudite article on the middle voice, in first volume of the *Museum Criticum*, by the Rev. James Tate. Even though we concede, then, to Unitarians the reflex use of *ἑπικαλισμαι* in the verses under consideration, it will avail them nothing; for the only difference will be the addition of the words *for themselves*, to the words, "they called upon the name of Christ."

The evidence which we would seek to adduce in favour of Christ's divinity, from the fact of his having received religious worship while on earth, without reproving those who offered it; is met on the part of the Socinians, by a denial that the deference paid to him, ever amounted to any thing more than mere external homage. The verb used in all such cases is *προσκυνεω*, which, say they, relates simply to a person who pays re-

spect or homage to a superior. It is granted, that the mere use of this verb affords no sufficient evidence of the fact; because the degree of homage offered to Christ, would depend entirely upon the ideas entertained of him by those who offered it. At the same time, however, it is to be borne in mind, that *προσκυνειν*, is used in Scripture in reference to persons offering *religious worship*;* and is at all times expressive of the most deferential respect; so that it is difficult to account for our Saviour's receiving, jealous as he was of his Father's glory, such submissive homage without warning those who offered it, that they might go too far in their respect; except upon the supposition that he himself was God, and worthy of the deepest reverence and devotion of his creatures.

But whatever difficulty may attach to the full force of *προσκυνειν* when used with reference to men, there can be none in its reference to angels. They could not be ig-

* John iv. 20, 21. 1 Cor. xiv. 25, &c. In the Septuagint, it is generally used as synonymous with the Heb. *השתחוה* *hishtakh-avah*, (see Gen. xxiii. 12. 1 Sam. i. 3. &c.) of which Gesenius says, That though it is used with respect to equals and our earthly superiors, it is *commonly* used with respect to the Divine Being, whom we invoke; and, without the addition, signifies to *prostrate ourself* (before God) to pray, to perform one's devotions. Hebr. H. W. B. 1rste. Aufl. 1812. On this statement of Gesenius, the following important remark is made by Dr Winer of Leipzig: "Of persons who stand in the relation of mere *friendship* to each other, I can find no instance in the Old Testament in which *שחח* is used. When one saluted another who was his equal or nearly so, by kneeling, it was to let him know that he respected him as his superior or master, just as among us, one would allow another to whom he is not at all inferior, to go to the right. With this remark, the observation of Gesenius, will not be misunderstood."—*Biblisches Realwörterbuch*, u. s. f. p. 299. note *. Leipz. 1820.

norant of his true nature ; and the worship, of course, which they offer is not mere external homage, but spiritual worship and devotion.

NOTE L. P. 70.

“ The doxology or ascription of everlasting blessedness, (in Rom. ix. 5.) has been objected to, for this reason, that it is every where applied to the Father ; and ought not therefore to be understood of Christ in a single passage. But this is repeated in Heb. xiii. 21. ; and also in 1 Pet. iv. 11. So that we see, it does not depend upon one place. Some add to these, 2 Tim. iv. 18. Jude 25. which are not so clear. But all doubt vanishes as to 2 Pet. iii. 18. Rev. i. 6. and v. 8—14 ; unless we not only deprive those two books of canonical authority, but also very absurdly refuse to let them be elucidated, by comparing them with other places.”—*Author's Note.* On Rom. ix. 5. we have already remarked ; see Note D. p. 243. In Heb. xiii. 21. there can be little doubt, but that the relative *to whom* refers to Christ, the last antecedent ; and in 1 Pet. iv. 11. the reference is unquestionable. I can discover no reason, why the passages from 2 Timothy and from Jude should be pronounced “ not so clear.” If we admit *κυριος* and *σωτηρ* in the New Testament to apply to Christ, nothing can be more plain, than the reference of these passages to him.

NOTE M. P. 72.

Whatever may be thought of the author's assertion,

as applied to modern times, (and it is a point upon which I do not feel myself called to pronounce an opinion,) there can be no doubt of its correctness, in respect to the injunctions and practice of the Jewish law. By that law, blasphemy was denounced as a capital crime, cognizable by the civil magistrate,—or rather, I should say, by the judicial council of the Jews,—like any other offence against the rules and order of civilized society, Lev. xxiv. 16. See *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*, by Sir J. D. Michaelis, translated by Dr A. Smith, B. v. 251.

NOTE N. P. 83.

From the language of the Apostle in this verse, a most ingenious and powerful argument in favour of the doctrine of the atonement has been deduced by Dr Wardlaw, in a volume of Sermons recently published. After showing, from the apostle's words, that it was his intention to give in this verse a *recapitulation* of the leading doctrines which “he had delivered unto” the Corinthians; Dr W. proceeds to prove, that, upon the Socinian interpretation of the words, the apostle instead of recapitulating the doctrines of the gospel, only states the evidence which proved his gospel to be true.

“Christ's ‘dying for our sins,’ then, according to the class of interpreters I have just referred to, means simply, that his death confirmed that doctrine, by adherence to which forgiveness of sins and eternal life are obtained. Well: suppose the interpretation correct. Still Christ's ‘dying for our sins,’ forms no part of the doctrine itself, in support and confirmation of which he

died, and adherence to which leads to pardon and life. Still, therefore, we have the question to ask, Where, in the statement contained in our text, is the doctrine which Paul had preached? How can we suppose a man to come forward and preface what he is going to say, with a formal intimation that he is about to remind the persons to whom he writes, of the doctrines they had before heard from his lips, and then, instead of following this intimation with any statement of doctrine, merely to re-assure them that he by whom the truths they had received were first taught, the Founder of the christian faith, had died to attest their divine authority. Unless we would charge the inspired apostle with such absurdity or inadvertency, we must consider Christ's dying for our sins as *a point of doctrine*, and not a mere fact in evidence, &c." p. 7. The whole passage is worthy of the attentive perusal, and serious consideration, of all whose minds are in any way unsettled upon this point.

NOTE O. P. 96.

The Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews, has been the subject of much learned and elaborate discussion. The best work on the subject is one recently published by Professor Stuart of Andover, U.S. whose work on the Trinity, &c. has been already mentioned, p. 250; and entitled, "*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*," 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1828. In the first volume of this work—a work which is, perhaps, unequalled in the English language as an exegetical commentary upon Scripture—the author, with great skill and patience, examines and refutes the objections

urged against the canonical authority and Pauline origin of this Epistle. His conclusions are every where supported by the most convincing evidence; and the whole work exhibits indications of a highly acute, powerful, and cultivated mind.

NOTE P. P. 104.

If the reader is solicitous to see these objections stated, and fully and ably refuted, he cannot do better than betake himself to the study of the masterly work of Archbishop Magee; "*Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice*," 2 vols. 8vo.—to Dr Smith's "*Four Discourses on the Sacrifice and Priesthood of Christ*," &c. a work worthy of the pen which produced the *Scripture Testimony*; and to Dr Wardlaw's *Discourses on the Socinian Controversy*, 4th edit. To the younger and less experienced reader, let me particularly recommend the last named work, as combining all the acuteness and discrimination of the first, with all the piety and scriptural correctness of the second, whilst it is more simple, and perspicuous than either.

NOTE Q. P. 164.

This passage, which affords so very strong a proof of the pre-existence of Christ, and presumption of his divinity, has been much assailed by Socinians. They have endeavoured to get over it, by translating it, "who, though rich, for your sakes *was* poor, that ye, &c.;" and referring it to his state while on earth, as "rich in mi-

raculous powers, which it was at his option to employ for his own benefit ;” but choosing for their sakes to live in poverty. This strange interpretation they attempt to defend, 1. By asserting that the verb *πτωχευω*, signifies not to *become poor*, but to *be poor* ; and that it should be here translated in accordance with this latter meaning. But this is denied, as many instances may be furnished from the LXX. of its being used in the former of these senses ; see Judges vi. 6. ; Psal. xxxiii. (*xxxiv.*) 10. ; Prov. xxiii. 21., &c. Smith, vol. ii. 400. 2. They assert that the tense here used is the Aorist, which “ expresses a perfect action, in past definite time ; which time is ascertained from the connection. *Christ ἠπτώχευσε*, was poor. When ? *πλούσιος ἦν*, at the time when he was rich.” To the examination of this assertion, Dr Smith has devoted his usual attention and learning ; and, I need hardly add, with his usual success. Without following him in his remarks, it will be sufficient to quote, in opposition to this canon on the force of the Aorist in Greek, the statement of the learned and philosophic Thiersch. “ The Greek tongue has peculiar forms to express a past event on which the mind does not dwell for any continuance, but which it merely regards as *in itself absolutely past*, *χρονος ἀοριστος aoristus*.” *Gr. Gr. trans. by Sir D. K. Sandford*, § lxxxv., obs. 2. The same doctrine is laid down by *Buttman* and *Matthiae* ; and, with some difference of process, by *Fischer* and *Hermann*. See *Scrip. Test*, II. p. 403.

But apart altogether from these grammatical inquiries, we may meet this interpretation upon general principles, and enquire, How is it possible for a creature to possess miraculous power which shall be at his own

regulation, and which he may, if he please, employ for his own aggrandisement? Or what is the *meaning* of such an assertion? Is it not God who in every case performs the miracle; and is it possible that that power which belongs only to him, can be delegated to a creature, to be used as that creature may see meet? Impossible: but if Jesus Christ while on earth, really possessed miraculous powers, which were under his own direction; i. e. if he had the power, not merely of *predicting* a miracle, but actually the power of *working* it, then he must have possessed omnipotence—he must have been God. The apostles possessed miraculous gifts; but these enabled them to do nothing more than *foretell* the occurrence of a miracle, to *produce* which, however, they had no power. Taking Socinians upon their own ground, therefore, it appears that either Christ is God, or their interpretation of this verse is an absurdity.

NOTE R. P. 174.

“*To the Heathens.* That the apostles, from prudence, accommodated themselves, when among the Jews, to their doctrines, is already carried so far by some very learned divines, that they are for excluding from the true and pure doctrine of Jesus Christ, whatever was received in the schools of the Jews, (perhaps from among the Egyptians and Chaldeans;) and this must also include the end of the world, the resurrection of the dead, and the general judgment. Now, according to this rule, we must also set aside the doctrine of the immortality of the soul; at least, that of the coming of a once promised Messiah, &c. But if so, what will remain? Indeed, this last

point is allowed without disguise, by the learned divine whom I have in view, who also declares, that he is not convinced of a supernatural influence in the apostles, and supposes that they did not agree fully with Christ respecting the nature of his kingdom. But were these things admitted, the divine authority of their writings would fall to the ground; the evidence of which, this gentleman makes to consist merely in the purity of their moral doctrine. Now, is there not reason to fear, that such learned men measure the sincerity of Jesus and his apostles by their own; to which they appeal, and which is the tribute they pay for teaching and defending Christianity, only with a view to destroy it? How much better would it be to maintain, that whatever Jesus and his apostles said, as agreeing with the doctrine of the Jews; whatever they, not barely mentioned by way of allusion, but positively asserted, variously repeated and confirmed; was thereby separated and purified from the frivolous traditions, against which they so often and so severely inveighed! How little the ambassadors of Christ would concede, even in smaller matters, to the Jewish opinions! see Gal. ii. 3—14, &c. How much contempt and persecution might they otherwise have avoided! At any rate, to the heathen they could not, in their discourses and epistles, render themselves acceptable, by any doctrines of the Jews; nor by those of the resurrection and the general judgment, as Paul experienced with regard to Felix.”—*Author's Note.*

NOTE S. P. 174.

“A certain expositor understands here, by God's

judging the world," the enlightening of mankind by the doctrine of Christ,—such an illumination as shall be triumphant, and condemn all idolatrous and impious principles of the nations. To favour this view, Matt. xix. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 2. are produced. But could Paul's hearers understand the words in such a sense, which elsewhere is discovered only by the circumstances. There is not a word said of *condemning doctrine*, but of *God's judgment* by a person; "*a man*,"—a man no more living or teaching on earth; but whose personal arranging of things, and lawful authority to judge, were "confirmed to all by his resurrection from the dead." There is no instructing or refuting judgment announced, but a *righteous* judgment: and it is limited to a certain period—an "appointed day." The above Scriptures, and many others, which speak of Christ's coming again, and of the judgment, confirm the certainty of the usual and only consistent interpretation of the words. Hence, we may see the consequence of any one exercising his ingenuity in giving to a single text relating to revealed doctrine, an arbitrary meaning; without properly consulting a number of similar expressions, or parallel places."—*Author's Note.*

NOTE T. P. 219.

The *terms*, however, ought not to be rejected, when the things which they signify are proved and acknowledged, except better were to be found in human language. Scruples arise more particularly, respecting the term *persons*. It is not necessary to consider this term, as a metaphysical and scholastic invention of the old di-

vines; because it may have been derived from common and civil life. To have a free will—to have property—to make a proposal—to bear witness—to have the relation of equality, or of superiority, to other reasonable subjects, constitute *a person*. But such things are ascribed distinctly to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. For example, the Father and the Son are *two distinct* witnesses; while Christ, on the contrary, though possessed of a two-fold power of rational operation, is but *one* witness, John viii. 16—18. For which reason, besides others, Christ is properly said to have two natures in one person. Two important sciences, such as Metaphysics and Christian Theology are, never can, when properly consulted, be inconsistent. But prepossession, or want of examination, may abuse the one to the injury of the other. Some philosophers have supposed, that they could establish the doctrine of the Trinity from reason; but their demonstration turned only on the distinction of properties, or powers, of a spirit; which does not come up to what the Bible reveals. On the contrary, some divines, despising all use of, and illustration from, metaphysics, have shewn that they did not penetrate deeply into that science. In the meantime, according to our ideas, the knowledge and definition of those terms which belong to that part of metaphysics which is called *Entology*, (how generally soever they be there considered) owe their origin to particular experience, to observation, and to consequent comparison. But if so, it is not surprising, that the metaphysical definition of a *person*, formed according to what we find in all persons that are finite, and known to us in nature, seeing they are always distinct, substantial beings;

cannot accurately and perfectly express the distinctions which are in the Eternal Being. There is perhaps reason to suspect that, through an abuse of metaphysics, those who differ from us, much rather than we, find great difficulties in acknowledging revealed religion."—

Author's Note.

THE END.

PREPARING FOR PUBLICATION,

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